

SAFETY COMMITTEE

Minutes of a meeting of the Safety Committee of the Bolsover District Council held in Committee Room 1, Sherwood Lodge, Bolsover, on Thursday, 10th July 2008 at 1400 hours.

PRESENT:-

Members:-

Councillors J. A. Clifton, D. McGregor and B. R. Murray-Carr

Officers:-

L. Keeling (Head of Human Resources and Payroll), T. Walker (Health and Safety Officer), T. Robinson (Property and Estates Manager) and R. Leadbeater (Democratic Services Officer).

Unison:-

R. Farnsworth, R. Frisby and M. J. Ritchie

Unite:-

There were no Unite representatives in attendance

169. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor P. M. Bowmer.

170. ELECTION OF CHAIR

Moved by Councillor B. R. Murray-Carr, seconded by Councillor J. A. Clifton.

RESOLVED that Councillor D. McGregor be elected as Chair for the ensuing year.

Councillor D. McGregor in the Chair

171. APPOINTMENT OF VICE CHAIR

Moved by M. J. Ritchie, seconded by R. Frisby

RESOLVED that R. Farnsworth be appointed as Vice Chair for the ensuing year.

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172. URGENT ITEMS OF BUSINESS

There were no urgent items of business to consider.

173. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest submitted.

174. TERMS OF REFERENCE

Moved by Councillor B. R. Murray-Carr, seconded by Councillor J. A. Clifton
RESOLVED that the Terms of Reference be agreed.

175. MINUTES – 24TH APRIL 2008

Moved by Councillor J. A. Clifton, seconded by Councillor D. McGregor
RESOLVED that the minutes of a meeting held on 24th April 2008 be accepted as a true record.

Minute No. 957 - Waste Improvement Plan Update

Further to questions, the Health and Safety Officer confirmed that workplace assessments with regard to the Bulky Refuse collection service had been considered and referred back to the Street Services Manager with a request to review procedures further.

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176. SICKNESS ABSENCE/OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH STATISTICS

The Head of Human Resources and Payroll presented the report to advise the Safety Committee of the Sickness Absence Occupational Health Referral Statistics for 2007/08 with 2006/07 comparisons. The meeting was advised that an outturn of 7.37 days per FTE had been achieved for sickness absence against the target of 9.5 days per FTE and national average of 9.6 days. In the family group, Bolsover had been placed second only to Teesdale who had outturned at 6.6 days; however Bolsover was the best district council in Derbyshire in respect of sickness absence.

Occupational Health referrals were slightly higher than last year and outcomes detailed in the report.

Stress was still one of the highest causes of sickness absence at 17.5% of all absence, however days lost had improved slightly. The national stress absence percentage was 23%. More work would be undertaken as part of the Council's People Strategy to help to reduce this further.

A detailed breakdown by department was included in the report.

Union representatives questioned whether any action had been taken to remedy the level of absence caused by lifting and handling accidents. The Health and Safety Officer advised that the majority of lifting and handling, muscular/skeletal and back problems were attributed to Waste Services and Grounds Maintenance operatives which was to be expected. It was added that there may be scope for specialist outside training to address these issues. The Health and Safety Officer was investigating this possibility further.

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

177. FIRE RISK ASSESSMENTS UPDATE

The Property and Estates Manager presented the report to update the Committee on the Fire Risk Assessments carried out by Independent Consultants at all Council premises in accordance with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005). Sherwood Lodge, Contact Centres, Leisure Centres and Depots were 100% complete and Pleasley Vale Business Park was 90% completed with the remaining works ongoing. The Head of Housing had confirmed that outstanding works to Group Dwellings would be concluded by the end of August 2008.

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Further to questions, the Health and Safety Officer confirmed that the new procedures would allow a 'stay put policy' to be put in place for evacuation procedures in group dwellings. Questions were raised as to whether residents had been fully informed. The Health and Safety Officer confirmed that guidance would be provided to all residents.

The Chair requested it be noted that it was considered extremely important that all residents were fully informed of the procedures, as in most cases residents in group dwellings were elderly and frail.

Members asked questions with regard to the supply of Evac Chairs. The Health and Safety Officer advised that these were not available in group dwellings as trained personnel were not in situ to execute a safe evacuation. It was added that if a risk assessment had not recommended the supply of Evac Chairs, installation may add to confusion over the evacuation procedures. The Health and Safety Officer added that the Evac Chair in Sherwood Lodge had been supplied for the purpose of evacuating disabled people attending meetings in the Council Chamber.

The Chair added that full consultation should be carried out with residents of group dwellings to ascertain their thoughts and a full training programme undertaken to ensure that all residents were aware of the procedures in place.

Moved by M. J. Ritchie, seconded by Councillor B. R. Murray-Carr
RESOLVED that the report be received and the content noted.

The Property and Estates Manager left the meeting.

178. WORKPLACE INSPECTION PROGRAMME UPDATE

The Health and Safety Officer presented the report to advise the meeting that under the new policy and guidance, all service areas had completed at least one Health and Safety Inspection. Outstanding items still remained in Regeneration and Environmental Health however these were expected to be completed shortly.

Members asked questions with regard to the recent incident at Creswell Leisure Centre and asked what measures had been put in place to prevent a similar incident. The Health and Safety Officer confirmed that new methods had been used to secure equipment to the ceiling and lighting had been re-sited.

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

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179. RISK ASSESSMENT POLICY AND GUIDANCE

The Health and Safety Officer presented the report which included a new policy and guidance designed to cover the Council's responsibilities under the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999. This covered the employer's legal duty to take reasonable care to ensure that health and safety was not compromised through excessive exposure to risks arising from the way work was undertaken or organised.

Moved by Councillor D. McGregor, seconded by Councillor J. A. Clifton
RECOMMENDED that the Workplace Health and Safety Risk Assessment Policy and Guidance be forwarded to Council for approval.

(Head of Human Resources and Payroll/Council)

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

Moved by Councillor J. A. Ritchie, seconded by Councillor D. McGregor
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 it involves 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.

The Chair left the meeting

R. Farnsworth in the Chair

181. ACCIDENT AND STRESS STATISTICS 2007/08 EXEMPT – PARAGRAPH 2

The Health and Safety Officer presented the report to Committee in respect of accident and stress statistics for the period 1st April 2007 to 31st March 2008 with comparative figures for the same period of 2006/07. A full list of all accidents reported for the period were provided in the report for consideration.

Moved by M. J. Ritchie, seconded by Councillor B. R. Murray-Carr
RESOLVED that the report be received.

The meeting concluded at 1437 hours.