

## **SAFETY COMMITTEE**

Minutes of a meeting of the Safety Committee of the Bolsover District Council held in Committee Room 1, Sherwood Lodge, Bolsover, on Tuesday 27<sup>th</sup> April 2010 at 1400 hours.

### **PRESENT:-**

R. Farnsworth - Chairman

### **Members:-**

Councillors P.M Bowmer, D. McGregor, B.R. Murray-Carr and K.F. Walker.

### **Unison:-**

R. Frisby and J. Hendy.

### **Unite:-**

C. Dodsworth and S. Sambrooks.

### **Officers:-**

W. Lumley (Chief Executive Officer), L. Keeling (Head of Human Resources and Payroll), T. Walker (Health and Safety Officer), D. Bonsor (Housing Needs Manager) (to Minute No. 897), A. Lowery (Street Services Manager) and R. Leadbeater (Democratic Services Officer).

### **894. APOLOGY**

An apology for absence was received from the Property and Estates Manager.

### **895. URGENT ITEMS OF BUSINESS**

There were no urgent items of business to consider.

### **896. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest submitted.

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### **897. MINUTES – 9<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY 2010**

Moved by Councillor B.R. Murray-Carr, seconded by Councillor D. McGregor  
**RESOLVED** that the minutes of a meeting of the Safety Committee held on 9<sup>th</sup> February 2010 be approved as a true record.

#### Minute No. 719 – General Health and Safety Report

In response to Members' questions the Health and Safety Officer confirmed that a timetable to address outstanding matters from the Health and Safety Audits had still to be drawn up.

#### Minute No. 720 – Update on Fire Risk Assessment Review

The Housing Needs Manager advised Members that additional information had been received from the Fire Risk Assessment Contractor and the recommended programme of installation of smoke detectors had commenced. The first phase would be in respect of the 4 group dwellings which were expected to be completed during 2010. The Council's other general purpose blocks of flats would be fitted with smoke detectors as soon as possible thereafter. The actual timescale would be confirmed once final quotes for the work had been received.

Members suggested that temporary smoke detectors be installed by DFRS in the interim period which the Housing Needs Manager agreed to look into.

(Housing Needs Manager)

The Housing Needs Manager left the meeting.

### **898. SICKNESS ABSENCE/OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH STATISTICS**

The Head of Human Resources and Payroll presented the report to advise Members of sickness absence/occupational health referral statistics for 2009/10 with comparable figures for 2008/09. The outturn of 8.39 days for 2009/10 was better than both the target of 8.5 days and the outturn for 2008/09 of 8.43 days.

Members were advised of adjustments to the figures stated in the report. All sickness absence had decreased year on year except for that attributed to stress.

Two routine health surveillance clinics were held during January to March 2010.

Moved by Councillor B.R. Murray-Carr, seconded by Councillor K. F. Walker  
**RESOLVED** that the report be received.

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### **899. GENERAL HEALTH AND SAFETY REPORT**

The Health and Safety Officer presented the general health and safety report to update Members on a number of issues.

Members were provided with an update on the progress on the improvement notice issued to the Council and were advised that a full risk assessment programme would be carried out on all vibrating tools. An action plan would be put together in time for the HSE Inspector's visit on 18<sup>th</sup> May and all recommendations would be addressed by the deadline of 24<sup>th</sup> May 2010. Operators of vibrating tools and managers would all receive training in May.

The Street Services Manager stated that the Council currently used 62 separate pieces of vibrating equipment to carry out grounds maintenance and street cleansing. All operators had kept a log of the equipment used and for how long during the course of a normal working day, which would be continued to enable all equipment to be monitored. Restrictions on use and changes to work rotas had already been put in place as a result of this monitoring where an operators' exposure to vibration had reached the maximum permitted levels. This was particularly an issue when several pieces of vibrating equipment needed to be used in one day resulting in a cumulative amount of exposure. North East Derbyshire District Council had also carried out some equipment testing on behalf of Bolsover District Council.

In response to Members' questions the Street Services Manager advised that although potential for problems existed, there was no current impact on the work programme. In the short term, this was being managed by rotation of tasks and personnel but a more long term solution would require a programme of replacement of vibrating tools for newer equipment which emitted a lower level of vibration.

Members raised concerns in respect of the existing hand arm vibration policies in place as this had been a high profile issue nationally for some considerable time. Questions were also raised with regard to the type of testing carried out during Occupational Health Surveillance Checks. The Health and Safety Officer agreed to contact Occupational Health to clarify this point.

The Street Services Manager added that action had previously been taken to address hand/arm vibration as a result of issues identified by routine health surveillance checks. These checks were available to all personnel working with vibrating tools and were mandatory every year for all those who had previously reported problems or symptoms.

Chris Dodsworth declared an interest and left the meeting at this point.

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The Street Services Manager continued that measures had been put in place previously including job rotation and surveys. However, much more information was now available in respect of recommended exposure limits and risks, which had previously focussed on very high level vibration tools rather than the cumulative effects of lower level vibration.

Members raised concerns that the measures taken had not been sufficient to avert the HSEs enforcement notice. The Chief Executive Officer added that Members were right to raise these concerns and more emphasis needed to be put on forward planning. A review of all the issues raised by the HSE was being carried out which would involve consultation with operatives.

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

### **900. STREET SERVICES IMPROVEMENT PLAN**

The Street Services Manager gave a verbal report to update Members on the Street Services Improvement Plan.

Members were advised that the HSE's report had been taken very seriously and the improvement plan would be available for the next Safety meeting. This would demonstrate the volume of work undertaken which was fully comprehensive and would go much further than just meeting the recommendations to ensure compliance into the future. Housing Services had also been involved in the review which would cover as many Health and Safety issues as possible, not just limited to hand/arm vibration. A user friendly guide would be produced for the workforce outlining new procedures. It was added that the service was committed to achieving the work required by the Notice within the prescribed deadline.

A review of the 72 identified issues for Street Services on the Corporate Risk Assessment would be carried out but this would take significant resources. It was added that North East Derbyshire had a dedicated Health and Safety Officer for their depot which put into context the amount of work and investment required to ensure all health and safety issues were fully addressed and updated. Thanks were extended to North East Derbyshire for their assistance in providing test data for vibrating tools.

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Members thanked the Street Services Manager for his report and added that the seriousness of the situation should be emphasised to avoid any future occurrence.

Members were advised that the Improvement Plan would be presented to the next Safety Committee meeting.

(Street Services Manager)

### **901. 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.

### **902. ACCIDENT AND STRESS STATISTICS JANUARY TO MARCH 2010 EXEMPT – PARAGRAPH 2**

The Health and Safety Officer presented the report to advise Members of Accident and Stress statistics from January to March 2010.

Members were requested to note that lost time accidents had reduced from 9 in 2009 to 2 in the current year with accident reports reducing from 20 to 9. Slips, trips and falls continued to be the highest cause of accidents.

Stress related absence had risen during this quarter in comparison to the same period in 2009, however only one case had been identified as work related.

Members' attention was drawn to the detailed breakdown of accidents included with the report. Members extended their congratulations to all concerned in providing health and safety education and advice which had contributed to the reduction in accidents.

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

**RESOLVED** that the report be received.

The meeting concluded at 1500 hours.