

SAFETY COMMITTEE

Minutes of a meeting of the Safety Committee of the Bolsover District Council held in Committee Room One, Sherwood Lodge, Bolsover, on Wednesday, 28th July 2010 at 1400 hours.

PRESENT:-

Members:-

Councillors R.J. Bowler, P.M Bowmer, J.A. Clifton, D. McGregor and B.R. Murray-Carr.

Unison:-

R. Frisby and J. Hendy.

Unite:-

S. Sambrooks.

Officers:-

W. Lumley (Chief Executive Officer), T. Walker (Health and Safety Officer), D. Bonsor (Housing Needs Manager) (to minute no. 195), A. Lowery (Street Services Manager) and R. Leadbeater (Democratic Services Officer).

189. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Rob Farnsworth (Unison), C. Dodsworth (Unite) and Linda Keeling (Head of Human Resources and Payroll).

190. ELECTION OF CHAIR

Moved by Councillor R. Bowler, seconded by Councillor B.R. Murray-Carr
RESOLVED that Councillor D. McGregor be elected as Chair for the ensuing year.

Councillor D. McGregor – in the Chair

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191. APPOINTMENT OF VICE CHAIR

Moved by R. Frisby, seconded by J. Hendy

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

192. URGENT ITEMS OF BUSINESS

There were no urgent items of business to consider.

193. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest submitted.

194. MINUTES – 27TH APRIL 2010

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

RESOLVED that the minutes of a meeting of the Safety Committee held on 27th April 2010 be approved as a true record.

Minute No. 899 – General Health and Safety Report

The Health and Safety Officer advised that discussions had taken place with Occupational Health who had confirmed that an annual questionnaire was presented to all employees exposed to hand arm vibration. The checks carried out by Occupational Health were in relation to general health and physical tests and assessments of hand grip strength and carpal tunnel.

Minute No. 897 (720) Update on Fire Risk Assessments

The Housing Needs Manager advised that contractors had been engaged to install a combination door entry/smoke alarm that would be trialled at two of the Council's blocks of flats. Installation would be carried out in one to two weeks. If this type of alarm proved successful, it would be considered for roll out to all the Council's blocks of flats. Progress would be reported back to Members.

Members requested that the Housing Needs Manager contact the Derbyshire Fire and Rescue Service to consider fitting temporary smoke detectors in these blocks of flats in the interim period.

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The Housing Needs Manager left the meeting.

195. TERMS OF REFERENCE

Moved by Councillor D. McGregor, seconded by Councillor B.R. Murray-Carr
RESOLVED that the Terms of Reference of the Safety Committee be approved.

196. SICKNESS ABSENCE/OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH STATISTICS

The Health and Safety Officer presented the report to advise Members of sickness absence/Occupational Health statistics for the period April to June 2010.

Members' attention was drawn to the outturn of 1.64 days per full time equivalent compared with the same period last year of 2.14 days per fte. The target for April to June 2010 was 2.10 days. A breakdown of long and short term sickness absence by department was included with the report for further information.

One Health Surveillance clinic had been held during the period and the Primary Care Trust had attended the Council's Summer Forum, carrying out blood pressure checks and providing advice on smoking cessation.

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

197. GENERAL HEALTH AND SAFETY REPORT

The Health and Safety Officer presented the report for Members' information and tabled an additional document detailing accidents during the April to June quarter. Accidents had reduced from 22 last year to 10 this year with no reportable accidents.

A discussion took place on the practice of using supermarket shopping trolleys at the depot to transport materials from storage to loading areas. This was considered unacceptable and it was requested that this matter be added to the list of Health and Safety issues at the depot for consideration.

The Health and Safety Officer drew Members' attention to the sample safety information card included in the agenda. These had been produced to advise operators of the safety issues in relation to each piece of equipment, including

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levels of vibration and noise emitted, personal protection to be used during operation and details of risk assessments. It was confirmed that all operators had received training and were aware of the instructions.

A question was raised with regard to maintenance of ear protection equipment. The Street Services Manager confirmed that this would be included in the health and safety checklist.

Members' attention was drawn to the Health and Safety Executive's (HSE) Enforcement Notice Action Plan which was appended to the report.

The Health and Safety Officer asked Members to consider the Control of Hand Arm Vibration Policy for recommendation to Council. Members were advised that in accordance with the HSE's recommendations, some minor amendments had been made to the policy.

Moved by Councillor B. R. Murray-Carr, seconded by Councillor J.A. Clifton
RESOLVED that (1) the report be accepted and the HSE's recommended amendments to the Vibration Control Policy be accepted;

(2) the revised Vibration Control Policy be recommended to Council for approval.

(Health and Safety Officer/Head of Democratic Services)

198. STREET SERVICES ACTION PLAN

The Street Services Manager presented the report to update Members on a number of health and safety issues raised at a previous meeting of the Safety Committee.

Members' attention was drawn to training dates detailed in the report in respect of risk assessments which were incorrect. A training date had now been set for 11th August and updates would be provided to the next meeting.

The Street Services Manager drew Members' attention to the Grounds Maintenance and Cleansing action plan detailed in the report.

Regular spot checks were being carried out on site by Managers and health and safety issues were being managed and monitored at regular departmental team meetings.

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A series of tool box talks on health and safety risks and operating procedures had been carried out along with awareness training in respect of the corporate Hand Arm Vibration Policy. Service specific training had also been provided. Members raised questions in respect of how training was incorporated around the normal work schedule. The Street Services Manager advised that training was programmed in to take place at the end of team meetings which normally took place before the start of the working day. Designated training days were also pre-arranged at times suitable for the particular service area they were delivered to.

The Street Services Manager advised that safety booklets included in Council vehicles were being updated and produced in a more user friendly style. The HSE had given some very positive feedback about the information produced.

The Health and Safety Officer agreed to provide Members of the Safety Committee with a copy of the accident flow chart detailed in the Action Plan.

Moved by Councillor B.R. Murray-Carr, seconded by Councillor J.A. Clifton **RESOLVED** that the report be noted.

199. EMPLOYEE SURVEY 2010 – HEALTH AND SAFETY ISSUES

The Health and Safety Officer presented the report to provide Members with the results of the 2010 Employee Survey in relation to health and safety issues.

It was noted that the number of responses had improved upon last year, however returns from Community Safety, Refuse and Grounds Maintenance, Housing Repairs and Maintenance and Cleaners remained low.

The Street Services Manager advised that responses had been historically low from Refuse and Grounds Maintenance but this year had shown considerable improvement. A number of steps had been taken to improve participation including discussion at team meetings and assistance with completing forms. The Street Services Manager added that whilst every effort was made to improve participation, completion of the survey was not mandatory.

It was suggested that the Employee Survey may need to be tailored towards different services and added that the questions asked were not always relevant to the employees at the depot whose areas of work in terms of health and safety, were significantly different to office based roles. Union Representatives added that finding time to complete the survey, which was considered to be quite lengthy, and understanding of the content may also be factors of the low response.

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At the request of Members, the Chief Executive Officer agreed to feedback these comments to Senior Management Team to suggest that the Employee Survey be reviewed. It was added that the same survey had been used for all employees to ensure consistency across the Council. Members raised concerns that the low rates of return would not provide a meaningful outcome overall.

The Health and Safety Officer advised Members that dissatisfaction with the Sickness Absence Policy was a prominent issue raised by the employee survey. These issues would be considered by focus groups consisting of managers and employees. The results would be submitted to Senior Management Team with a view to carrying out a review of the Sickness Absence procedure.

A full list of verbatim comments in respect of health and safety issues was included in the agenda for Members' information.

Moved by Councillor D. McGregor, seconded by Councillor J.A. Clifton
RESOLVED that the report be received.

The meeting concluded at 1553 hours.