

SAFETY COMMITTEE

Minutes of a meeting of the Safety Committee of Bolsover District Council held in Committee Room One, Sherwood Lodge, Bolsover, on Monday 25th July 2011 at 1400 hours.

PRESENT:-

Members:-

Councillors P.M Bowmer and B.R. Murray-Carr.

Unison:-

C. Gilfillan, J. Hendy and A. Lowery.

Unite:-

C. Dodsworth and S. Sambrooks.

Officers:-

L. Keeling (Head of Human Resources and Payroll), P. Campbell (Head of Housing) (from minute no.247 to minute no.249), T. Walker (Health and Safety Officer) and R. Leadbeater (Democratic Services Officer).

238. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Clifton, Gilmour and McGregor.

239. ELECTION OF CHAIR

Moved by C. Gilfillan, seconded by C. Dodsworth

RESOLVED that A. Lowery be elected as Chair for the ensuing year.

A. Lowery in the Chair

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240. APPOINTMENT OF VICE CHAIR

Moved by Councillor B.R. Murray-Carr, seconded by Councillor P. M. Bowmer
RESOLVED that Councillor D. McGregor be appointed as Vice Chair for the ensuing year.

241. URGENT ITEMS

There were no urgent items of business to consider.

242. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest submitted.

243. MINUTES – 18TH APRIL 2011

Moved by Councillor B. R. Murray-Carr, seconded by Councillor P.M. Bowmer
RESOLVED that the minutes of a meeting of the Safety Committee held on 18th April 2011 be approved as a true record.

244. TERMS OF REFERENCE

Moved by Councillor B. R. Murray-Carr, seconded by Councillor P.M. Bowmer
RESOLVED that the Terms of Reference for the Safety Committee be agreed.

245. SICKNESS ABSENCE/OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH STATISTICS 2010/2011

The Head of Human Resources and Payroll presented the report to update the Safety Committee on the sickness absence/occupational health statistics for 2010/11.

The meeting was advised that the outturn for sickness absence for 2010/11 was 7.97 days per FTE compared with 8.39 days per FTE for the previous year.

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The Head of Human Resources and Payroll provided amended figures in respect of the days lost as a result of the top three causes of sickness absence.

Muscular Skeletal	1137 days
Stress	483 days
Infections	447 days
Total	2067 days

There had been an increase in absence through muscular skeletal problems, however only two of these were due to work related injuries.

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

246. GENERAL HEALTH AND SAFETY REPORT

The Health and Safety Officer presented the report to update the Safety Committee on a number of health and safety issues and to seek approval of the draft Electricity at Work Policy and other amended policies.

Stress Risk Assessments

Four departments had now raised issues which were currently under consideration by the relevant managers.

Health and Safety Audit

The recent Health and Safety audit had been completed and rated 'Satisfactory'. Three points had been identified for action:

Benchmarking – The Health and Safety Officer had been requested to seek other similar authorities to benchmark health and safety performance against.

Workplace inspection – Heads of Service had been reminded to comply with the predetermined inspection timetable.

Policies – Policies in need of significant updating had now been completed. In future, policy reviews would take place every three years rather than every two, unless legislative or organisational structure changes necessitated an earlier review.

The Chair advised that Street Cleansing, Grounds Maintenance and Refuse Collection were currently benchmarked through the APSE Referral Network. This service could be bought into for all front line services to provide performance network returns based on data from other authorities. It was added that there would not be any additional financial outlay for the Council as the fees currently

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paid would cover any further services added to the scheme. Members requested that this facility be explored further with the Director of Neighbourhoods.

Questions were raised with regard to whether the Safety Committee was routinely informed of policies that had been reviewed. The Head of Human Resources advised that this was provided as a list included within the General Health and Safety Report presented to the Safety Committee. It was added that the biennial review of policies had been considered an unrealistic target and the decision had therefore been taken to extend the review period to three years. Any policy could still be reviewed at any time deemed necessary.

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

RESOLVED that the Chair of the Safety Committee discuss the possibility of APSI Referral Network benchmarking across front line services with the Director of Neighbourhoods.

(Chair of Safety Committee/Director of Neighbourhoods)

Improvement Notice Action Plan (Vibration)

The Chair advised that vibration measuring equipment was in place for Street Services and Grounds Maintenance personnel which enabled staff to monitor safe vibration levels throughout the course of their working day to prevent overexposure. Unite representatives advised that this procedure had not been implemented for Housing Repairs staff. The Chair suggested that this be raised with the Head of Housing/Director of Neighbourhoods.

(Chair of Safety Committee/Director of Neighbourhoods).

Electricity at Work

Concerns were raised by union representatives in respect of the Electricity at Work policy presented for the Committee's approval. These concerns were particularly related to the sections dealing with 'live working'. The Committee was advised by union representatives that other than for the purpose of testing, there would be no circumstances where a need to work on a live system existed.

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

RESOLVED that the draft Electricity at Work Policy be amended as follows:

Section 4 - Policy Statement

Bullet point number 5

Retain the words 'Forbid live working' and delete 'unless absolutely necessary in which case a permit to work must be issued before work begins'.

Section 7 - Safe Systems of Work

7.9 Live Working

This section to be removed in its entirety and replaced with the words

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'Under no circumstances must any work be carried out on equipment or system rated as LIVE by Council employees'.

Sherwood Lodge

The Chair advised that concerns had been raised at the Trade Union Liaison meeting in respect of the removal of the former restaurant area as a facility for staff to take their meal break from work, following management's decision to rent out the space. It was added that no formal consultation had taken place with the unions on this issue and there had been no indication of what alternative staff facilities would be provided. Although budget pressures were recognised, union representatives considered this to compromise the health and welfare of staff and further dialogue was needed. It was suggested that it may be appropriate to raise this issue through the Union/Employee Consultation Committee.

Moved by Councillor B.R. Murray-Carr, seconded by Councillor P.M. Bowmer
RESOLVED that (1) the report and changes to policies outlined be considered,

(2) amendments to the Electricity at Work Policy, First Aid at Work Policy, Mobile Phone Safety Policy and Noise at Work Policy be noted and the policies be updated and placed on ERIC.

The Head of Housing joined the meeting.

247. HEALTH AND SAFETY OFFICER VACANCY

The Head of Human Resources and Payroll presented the report to advise the Committee that the Health and Safety Officer's post would be vacant from 1st August 2011, following the resignation of the current postholder.

A report had been submitted to Senior Management Team on 7th July to consider options for a possible joint arrangement with another authority. Mansfield and Bassetlaw had expressed an interest and meetings would take place to further discuss options later this week. It was added that the Council was seeking to put in place a more robust service without the need for additional cost.

The Head of Human Resources and Payroll would present a business case to Senior Management Team and Council once further details were available.

Interim arrangements had been put in place with North East Derbyshire District Council who would be available to provide Health and Safety and Policy advice as required. The Head of Human Resources and Payroll confirmed that enquiries should still be directed through Bolsover's Human Resources Department.

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

Members and Union representatives requested that their thanks be recorded to the Health and Safety Officer for the excellent service and support he had provided throughout his employment with the Council and wished him well for the future.

248. GROUP DWELLINGS – LEGIONELLA RISK

The Head of Housing presented the report to update the Committee on the work being carried out at the Council's group dwellings to address the suspected legionella risk.

The meeting was advised that the work to be carried out was more substantial than originally envisaged. A report would be presented to Council to seek suspension of Contract Standing Orders to enable the work to proceed urgently. Contracts were currently being considered by Legal Services.

In response to questions, the Head of Housing confirmed that work should commence within the next two weeks subject to approval of the contract by Legal Services.

Moved by Councillor B.R. Murray-Carr, seconded by C. Gilfillan.
RESOLVED that the report be received and actions noted.

The Head of Housing left the meeting.

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

Moved by Councillor B.R. Murray-Carr, 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 item of business on the grounds that it may 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.

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250. ACCIDENT AND STRESS STATISTICS - APRIL TO JUNE 2011 EXEMPT – PARAGRAPH 2

The Health and Safety Officer presented the report to advise Members of the accident and stress statistics for the period April to June 2011, with comparative figures for the previous year. The Committee was provided with updated information in respect of two further accidents.

Concerns were raised in respect of the injuries as a result of attacks by animals. It was requested that it be relayed to relevant Heads of Service that mechanisms be put in place to make it clear to customers at the time of booking a repair, that animals should be kept away from Council employees entering properties.

Moved by Councillor B.R. Murray Carr, seconded by C. Gilfillan
RESOLVED that the report be received.

(Head of Human Resources and Payroll)

The meeting concluded at 1455 hours.