

Committee:	Safety Committee	Agenda Item No.:	7.
Date:	4 <sup>th</sup> November 2011	Category	
Subject:	General Health and Safety Report	Status	Open
Report by:	Head of Human Resources and Payroll		
Other Officers involved:	Head of Housing Street Services Manager Emergency and Responsive Manager HR Officer Assistant Facilities Manager		
Director	Joint Chief Executive Officer		
Relevant Portfolio Holder	Councillor E. Watts, Leader of the Council		

#### **RELEVANT CORPORATE AIMS**

STRATEGIC ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT – Continually improving our organisation, by ensuring we comply with legislation and best practice.

#### **TARGETS**

The subject matter does not relate to any targets specified in the Corporate Plan.

#### **VALUE FOR MONEY**

Helping ensure that the Council discharges its legal responsibilities and does not incur legal costs, fines or civil penalties.

## **THE REPORT**

### **Health & Safety Service Review**

Following the Health and Safety Officer leaving the Council on 31<sup>st</sup> July 2011, as previously reported, a service review is underway with Bassetlaw and Mansfield District Council to determine if a shared service would improve the resilience of the health and safety function.

An outline business case was produced in August 2011, and the Head of HR and Payroll received the agreement of Senior Management Team and Cabinet to proceed to a detailed business case. A copy of the outline business case report is attached.

An initial project planning meeting took place on 7 September 2011, when a set of data to be gathered and analysed was identified. This being necessary in order to establish any significant differences in terms of staffing levels and performance levels. It was agreed at this initial meeting that a full business case for approval in each Council would be concluded by no later than Christmas.

A further project group meeting took place on 7 October to take this work forward, and the Chair of Safety Committee has been invited to participate as part of the project group. Mansfield District Council is providing project management expertise from their Business Transformation Unit. Following this meeting a first draft of a detailed business case will be prepared by the end of October.

### **Animal Control**

It was raised at the last Safety Committee that action needed to be taken to remind tenants in Council properties to keep their dogs under control when our employees are visiting the premises. This issue was raised with the Head of Customer Service and Performance and the Head of Housing. The following action has been taken.

The following script has been added to the Omfax system and Contact Centre employees have been asked to ensure this message is relayed.

#### **Please read the following information to the customer:**

As a condition of your Tenancy Agreement you must keep all animals under control and provide a safe working environment for Council Employees at all times.

Failure to comply with the above may result in further action being taken against you.

The employee protection register is used to update CRM, which is then transferred to any worksheets for other departments to notify them to check the employee protection register and this includes dangerous/vicious animals.

## **Health and Safety Audit**

A health and safety audit was completed by internal audit in June 2011. The overall rating was 'Satisfactory'.

Three points were identified for action:

**1. Benchmarking** – The Health and Safety Officer is asked to find matching partners for comparing health and safety performance. These will need to be comparable in size and function and have the same profile of retained services (Housing, Leisure, Waste, Grounds Maintenance).

**Update:** This process is currently on hold pending the outcome of the health and safety service review with Mansfield and Bassetlaw, but as an interim step benchmarking data using information gathered through the Safety Network at East Midlands Councils has been added to the Safety Committee statistic report.

**2. Workplace inspection** – The Health and Safety Officer was asked to remind all Heads of Service that they must comply with the inspection timetable outlined in the Workplace inspections Policy. Whilst inspections are being undertaken they are often not being undertaken at the frequency outlined in the policy. All areas are expected to use the format included in the policy, unless they have agreed a different format with Human Resources.

**Update: A reminder was issued and the status of workplace inspections due in September is as follows:**

Workplace inspections have been carried out at Sherwood Lodge and Riverside Depot as per the schedule. No major issues or issues which could not be easily resolved were recorded.

Monitoring procedures are in place for the quarter October to December 2011, the outcome of which will be brought to the next Safety Committee.

**3. Policies** – It was noted that certain health and safety policies had not been reviewed within the timescales outlined in the policies themselves. As a matter of urgency those policies with the most significant updating required have been either subsequently updated or are 'in the system'. Following consideration by the Head of Human Resources and Payroll, the frequency of the review of policies will move from every two years to every three years in line with all other HR policies. Amendments will be made if there are any legislative or organisational structure changes during the three year period. Human Resources will be amending all the health and safety policies to reflect this during August/September.

**Update: The HR Officer has now updated all Policies on ERIC to reflect the three year review cycle agreed at the last meeting.**

## **Training**

First aid refresher training, 1 course for 5 employees  
Lone Worker (Personal Safety) training, 3 courses for 76 employees  
Manual Handling training, 5 courses for 43 delegates  
Working at Heights training, 1 course for 10 delegates  
Sweeper Driver Training, 1 course for 3 delegates

## **Improvement Notice Action Plan (Vibration)**

Work activity continues to be surveyed for all operatives as before – No further incidents of exposure over the legal maximum ( $5\text{ms}^2/400$  points) have been recorded.

The Street Services Manager reports that no further progress has been made on the electronic monitoring equipment, mainly due to the current workload not allowing time to pursue development with suppliers. There is no product currently on the market which fully meets our requirements at a reasonable cost. The electronic monitoring is not a legal requirement, but is seen as a more robust preventative system than our current manual one.

## **HSE Inspection of Waste Services**

The Health & Safety Executive (HSE) undertook an inspection of Waste Services, the purpose of the visit being to review waste services procurement of management in relation to the recycling element of the service which is undertaken by our contractors. A copy of the letter received from the HSE is attached.

The Street Services Manager has discussed this separately with both North East Derbyshire District Council and HW Martins. In order to progress the areas for improvement this has been added as an agenda item for our annual contract review meeting on 12 October 2011, at this meeting the Street Services Manager will hopefully agree a joint improvement plan / way forward.

The Street Services Manager has also been asked by the Joint Director of Neighbourhoods to draft a common pre and post tender health and safety protocol for contract monitoring. This will be based on the HSE inspection template, and will apply to such contracts as HW Martins, Shaw Trust, and Evendine.

A verbal update will be provided at the meeting.

## **Policy Reviews**

The following policy has been reviewed:

### **Legionella Policy**

The main change being a split of the Duty Holder role, previously carried out solely by the Head of Regeneration. This change will mean that once the Policy is approved, the managerial responsibility for the control of legionella bacteria will be split into two parts:

- The Head of Housing will be the Duty Holder with responsibility for Council owned 'domestic' housing stock including Group Dwellings (ie Council Houses)
- The Head of Regeneration will have responsibility for everything else, usually referred to as the 'commercial' property portfolio.

Each Duty Holder will appoint a Deputy Duty Holder to act in their absence.

Apart from the above changes the Legionella Policy has only had minor changes relating to personnel.

Training for the Head of Housing has already been identified to enable him to carry out this role effectively. As there are now two Duty Holders it will be possible for these two officers to deputise for each other.

The following is a new Policy:

### **Drugs and Alcohol Policy**

The Council has previously not produced a specific policy relating to the safety issues which drugs and alcohol abuse raise, but has relied solely on a provision within the Employee Code of Conduct. Reference is made to support for those with drug and alcohol problems within the Managing Sickness Absence Procedure and in producing this policy we have ensured that the two policies 'dovetail' in respect of provision of support/potential disciplinary action.

The aim of the Policy is to contribute to a safe, healthy and productive work environment by:

- Preventing drugs and alcohol problems through awareness raising;
- Identifying problems at the earliest stage;
- Offering support to those who have a problem.

Once the Policy is approved it is intended to offer again training to all managers and employees in order to raise awareness of the issues. This training is provided free of charge through the Derbyshire Drugs and Alcohol Advisory Service.

The policy was sent out for consultation over the summer period.

## **Legionella - Valley View, Shirebrook, Parkfields, Woburn House, Jubilee Court.**

The following update has been provided by the Head of Housing in respect of Valley View:

To date work has been carried out to 16 flats at Valley View. This includes work to the warden's flat and the flat that is used as the warden's office. The three tanks and cylinders that serve communal facilities have also been altered.

In total this leaves 14 flats still to complete and on the basis that each flat is being completed in approximately 6-7 days including asbestos removal the entire works should be completed by the start of December. It's a little difficult to give a specific date as we are having to work with the warden and the tenants in the flats and don't always know which flats we can gain access to until the Thursday/Friday and there have also been some tenants in hospital so things have had to be arranged with their families to get the work carried out.

The experience at Valley View will be used to draw up a specification and the works will go out to competitive tender. The next scheme will be Woburn House, but the specification will be drawn up in such a way that if each scheme is successful we will be able to move onto the next without the need to retender.

### **Sherwood Lodge**

New tenants Bolsover Police and Whyldre about food are now in residence. A fire risk assessment with the café has been undertaken, and actions completed. Bolsover Police supplied their fire risk assessment mid October. Any issues arising from this will be reported at the meeting.

## **IMPLICATIONS**

**Financial:** No direct financial implications or additional commitments

**Legal:** None

**Human Resources:** No direct implications

## **RECOMMENDATIONS that**

- 1. Various updates within the report are noted.**
- 2. Changes to Legionella Policy outlined are considered.**
- 3. The new Drugs and Alcohol Policy be considered.**
- 4. The Legionella Policy and the Drugs and Alcohol Policy be approved by Safety Committee and the policies be updated and placed on ERIC.**

**ATTACHMENT:** Yes (3) – Health & Safety Review Outline Business Case  
HSE Letter Dated 14 September 2011  
Drugs and Alcohol Draft Policy