

SAFETY COMMITTEE

Minutes of a meeting of the Safety Committee of Bolsover District Council held in Committee Room One, Sherwood Lodge, Bolsover, on Friday 1st June 2012 at 1000 hours.

PRESENT:-

Members:-

Councillors P. Bowmer, D. McGregor, K. F. Walker and G.O. Webster.

Unison:-

R. Farnsworth and A. Lowery.

Unite:-

I. Barber, S. Sambrooks and T. Walker.

Officers:-

J. Leah (Health and Safety Officer) and R. Leadbeater (Democratic Services Officer).

57. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor B.R. Murray-Carr and A. Grundy (Assistant Director of Human Resources and Payroll).

58. ELECTION OF CHAIR

Moved by Councillor P. Bowmer, seconded by Councillor K. F. Walker
RESOLVED that Councillor D. McGregor be elected as Chair for the ensuing year.

Councillor D. McGregor – Chair

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59. APPOINTMENT OF VICE CHAIR

Moved by S. Sambrooks, seconded by R. Farnsworth

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

60. URGENT ITEMS OF BUSINESS

There were no urgent items of business.

61. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest submitted.

62. TERMS OF REFERENCE

Moved by Councillor G.O. Webster, seconded by Councillor P. Bowmer

RESOLVED that the Terms of Reference of the Safety Committee be agreed.

63. MINUTES – 2ND MARCH 2012

Moved by Councillor G. O. Webster, seconded by I. Barber

RESOLVED that the minutes of a meeting of the Safety Committee held on 2nd March 2012 be approved as a true record.

Minute No. 937h – HSE Inspection of Waste Services

In response to questions, Members were advised that HW Martins had complied with all matters raised by the HSE. Regular meetings were now taking place between HW Martins and Street Services where health and safety matters were monitored.

64. SICKNESS ABSENCE/OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH STATISTICS 2011/12

The Health and Safety Officer presented the report to provide Members with an update on sickness absence and Occupational Health statistics for 2011/12. The outturn was 7.83 days per full time equivalent (fte) against a target of 8 days per

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fte and an outturn of 7.97 days per fte for the previous year. The main cause of sickness absence was reported as muscular/skeletal, it was added however this was not necessarily all work related. Occupational Health referrals had also reduced in comparison to the previous year.

Concerns were raised that absence attributed to stress had doubled since last year and that there were comparatively high levels of short and long term sickness absence in Contact Centres compared with other Council departments. Union representatives stated that Contact Centres had been consistently under resourced which, it was considered, could be a contributing factor to the absences.

Following discussion, the Chair requested that the Health and Safety Officer advise the Head of Human Resources and Payroll to explore the reasons for the increases in absence attributed to stress, along with the high number of Contact Centre absences. It was requested that the findings be reported back to the next meeting of the Safety Committee.

Moved by A. Lowery, seconded by Councillor K.F. Walker

RESOLVED that (1) the report be received;

(2) the Head of Human Resources and Payroll investigate the reasons for the increases in absence attributed to stress and the high number of Contact Centre absences and provide a report to the next meeting of the Safety Committee.

(Head of Human Resources)

65. GENERAL HEALTH AND SAFETY REPORT

The Health and Safety Officer presented the report to update Members on various Health and Safety issues.

Workplace Inspections

The Committee's attention was drawn to the table detailing workplace inspections. Out of the sixteen inspections scheduled to be carried out between January to March 2012, fifteen were stated as being overdue. One had been completed with the inspection report still awaited by Human Resources. The Health and Safety Officer advised that the relevant managers had been contacted and that this issue had also been raised at previous meetings.

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The Committee voiced deep concerns and it was noted that this had become an issue since Member involvement in the workplace inspections had ceased. The Chair suggested that a letter be sent from the Safety Committee to the Chief Executive Officer expressing these concerns.

(Chair of Safety Committee)

Leased premises Inspections

The Committee was advised that the Council had responsibility for the inspection of communal areas of leased properties. Questions were raised in respect of the inspections carried out on group dwellings. Members were advised that these inspections were not due to be carried out in the January to March programme.

Leisure Facilities Inspections

Discussions had taken place with Estates requesting that they consider taking responsibility for health and safety inspections of non occupied facilities such as pavilions, on behalf of Leisure Services. Members were advised that Estates visited these premises on a more regular basis than Leisure staff and checked those issues that would be included in inspections.

Training

Details of training provided between January to March 2012 was detailed in the report. The programme for next year was being closely considered to ensure that the training needs of the organisation were being met. The Health and Safety Officer was advised that a matrix of training requirements for each post had been previously provided by all Managers and this information should be held by Human Resources.

Pleasley Mills

A number of fire safety issues were currently being looked at as well as transport, and pedestrian issues in communal spaces.

Apprentices

Work was being carried out to produce guidance and procedures in relation to the Council's responsibilities for Apprentices.

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Policy and Review

The Health and Safety Officer advised that it was intended to align Health and Safety Policies across the councils involved in shared services. It was anticipated that many of the procedural inclusions would change. Committee members advised that any changes to policies would require the approval of the Safety Committee before being implemented.

SHE System Implementation

Fourteen users had been trained on the basics of the operation of the new Human Resources reporting system. Implementation had been halted as some concerns had been raised by the responsible officer for Data Protection. The Committee discussed the issue at some length and it was confirmed that enquiries were being made with other local authorities currently using the system as to the Data Protection issues raised. The Committee requested that clarity and a decision on the way forward be provided urgently. The Health and Safety Officer was requested to advise the Safety Committee of progress and responses received.

(Health and Safety Officer)

Health and Safety Manager/Officer Responsibilities

The Health and Safety Officer advised that the current health and safety policies had been written prior to the introduction of the two tier health and safety management and therefore individual roles were no longer defined. It was suggested that the responsibility for each aspect should be clear by referring to the individual job descriptions of the officers. As the policies were reviewed on a rolling programme it was suggested that these be amended as and when the review took place.

Moved by A. Lowery, seconded by Councillor K. Walker

RESOLVED that (1) updates in the report be noted;

(2) training be looked at by Human Resources to ensure that organisational and individual health and safety training needs are being met;

(3) until there is clarity established post the shared service review with regards to the two tier role (Health and Safety Officer/Manager), it is to be considered that responsibility rests with both roles/Health and Safety team where Policy states it rests with the Health and Safety Officer.

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(4) a letter be sent to the Chief Executive Officer expressing the Safety Committee's concerns in respect of the non compliance with Workplace Inspections.

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

Moved by Councillor D. McGregor, seconded by A. Lowery

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.

67. ACCIDENT AND STRESS STATISTICS JANUARY TO MARCH 2012 EXEMPT – PARAGRAPH 2

The Health and Safety Officer presented the report to advise the Committee of the Accident and Stress Statistics from January to March 2012.

The meeting was advised that incidences of accidents were generally low and there were no issues of concern.

Union representatives added that these figures were encouraging considering this was in respect of a period where icy conditions had been a factor.

Moved by A. Lowery, seconded by Councillor D. McGregor

RESOLVED that the report be received.

The meeting concluded at 1055 hours.