

SAFETY COMMITTEE

Minutes of a meeting of the Safety Committee of Bolsover District Council held in Committee Room One, Sherwood Lodge, Bolsover, on Friday 30th November 2012 at 1000 hours.

PRESENT:-

Members:-

Councillor D. McGregor - Chair

Councillors P. Bowmer, B.R. Murray-Carr, K. F. Walker and G.O. Webster.

Unison:-

R. Frisby.

Unite:-

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

Officers:-

P. Wilmot (Human Resources Manager), J. Moran (Health and Safety Manager)
J. Leah (Health and Safety Officer) and R. Leadbeater (Democratic Services Officer).

654. APOLOGIES

There were no apologies for absence.

655. APPOINTMENT OF VICE CHAIR

Moved by S. Sambrooks, seconded by T. Walker

RESOLVED that I. Barber be appointed as Vice Chair for the ensuing year.

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656. URGENT ITEMS OF BUSINESS

There were no urgent items of business.

657. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest submitted.

658. MINUTES – 1ST JUNE 2012

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

RESOLVED that the minutes of a meeting of the Safety Committee held on 1st June 2012 be approved as a true record.

Minute No. 65 – General Health and Safety Report (Health and Safety Manager/Officer responsibilities)

Councillor Murray-Carr stated that he was not in agreement with concern raised in at the previous meeting where it was suggested that the reasons for inspections not being carried out to schedule was due to Unions and the Members no longer driving the process. He suggested that the reason was due to the depth of the inspections in comparison to the levels of risk.

659. MINUTES – 7TH SEPTEMBER 2012

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

RESOLVED that the minutes of a meeting of the Safety Committee held on 7th September 2012 be approved subject to the following amendment:

Minute no. 390 – adjournment of meeting

At the appointed hour and after waiting the statutory fifteen minutes there was no quorum of ~~Members and~~ Union representatives present at the meeting.

The Human Resources Manager, Peter Wilmot, was welcomed to the meeting.

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660. SICKNESS ABSENCE/OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH STATISTICS APRIL TO JUNE 2012

The Human Resources Manager presented the report to advise Members of sickness absence/occupational health statistics for the period April to June, with comparative figures for the same period in 2011.

The sickness absence outturn for the period was 1.93 days per full time equivalent (FTE) against 1.63 days for 2011. This was an increase but remained below the target of 2 days. The increase was attributed to a higher level of long term sickness absence and also due to overall reductions in staffing levels, which had consequently reduced the full time equivalent.

There had been an increase in Occupational Health referrals from 6 in 2011 to 13 in 2012.

Members were pleased to note the reduction in sickness absence in relation to apprentices.

A full breakdown by department was attached to the agenda for information.

Questions were raised in respect of specific departments to which the Chair responded.

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

661. SICKNESS ABSENCE/OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH STATISTICS JULY TO SEPTEMBER 2012

The Human Resources Manager presented the report to advise Members of sickness absence/occupational health statistics for the period July to September, with comparative figures for the same period in 2011.

The sickness absence outturn for the period was 2.51 days per full time employee (FTE) against 2.39 days for 2011. Questions were raised as to whether absences were attributed to activities specific to a department. It was suggested that the number of employees per department be included for ease of reference. The Human Resources Manager advised that further exploration of the figures could be undertaken on request.

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

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662. GENERAL HEALTH AND SAFETY REPORT

The Health and Safety Officer presented the report to update Members on a number of Health and Safety matters.

SHE System Implementation

Members were advised that the Data Protection issues in respect of the SHE system had been resolved. Further updates to the software would be undertaken in the spring which would make the system more user friendly and more closely aligned to the Council's departmental structure. The injury reporting module was scheduled to go live and 1 years' backdated information would be inputted in due course

Health and Safety Documentation

An activity audit had been established which would consider the Council's current health and safety documentation and identify areas for improvement. It was also intended to make systems more user-friendly and allow resources to be targeted and prioritise health and safety work.

Inspections

Inspections were slightly behind schedule for the period. A table detailing the inspections undertaken was provided in the report. It was acknowledged that this list would be subject to revision.

The Committee was advised that the Community Houses were the responsibility of Environmental Health rather than housing and documentation had been amended accordingly. These inspections had been carried out on 9th August 2012. Group dwellings had been inspected by Housing on 14th September 2012.

Steps were currently in progress to improve the documentation in relation to inspections to ensure that the process was not overly bureaucratic.

Members raised questions with regard to arrangements for the move to The Arc, Clowne. The Health and Safety Officer advised that this would likely be inspected every 6 months. Leisure staff who were currently in situ, were carrying out the appropriate checks of the leisure facilities.

Further to questions, the Health and Safety Officer confirmed his attendance at two working groups in relation to the Arc relocation. A welcome pack for staff would include relevant health and safety information including manual handling advice.

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An inspection of the Oxcroft Depot site had given rise to some concerns in respect of the asbestos panels which formed part of the fabric of the depot building. The building had suffered significant acts of vandalism which had rendered the plumbing and electrics irreparable and there had also been some damage to the asbestos panels. An asbestos survey had been carried out in September 2012 on various areas in the building and no asbestos particles had been found. In response to questions regarding risk to health of employees previously based at the building, the Health and Safety Manager advised that in light of the results of the testing, it was very unlikely that previous employees would have been exposed to inhalable asbestos. Discussions were still ongoing in the relevant department in relation to disposal of the Oxcroft Depot site.

Further questions were raised in respect of the retrieval of reusable equipment from the depot site and any further risks as a result of intruders entering the building.

Fire Procedures

The Health and Safety Officer advised that work was being undertaken to simplify the current fire procedures in preparation for relocation to The Arc. It was intended to remove the need for a roll call system and for designated fire wardens to carry out a sweep of the building, which was considered the most effective method for open plan buildings. Procedures had also been reviewed at Pleasley Vale Mills.

Members' raised questions with regard to fire procedures and disabled access for The Arc, Clowne. The Health and Safety Officer advised that there had been some reasonable adjustments required for specific issues including disabled refuges. Evacuation procedures were being considered and a fire drill would be carried out as soon as practicable following the relocation.

Clowne Relocations

The Committee was advised that there would be excess first aiders and fire wardens when the move to Clowne took place. There would be minimal manual handling risk associated with the move but advice had been given in the move pack and further advice or awareness training could be provided by Human Resources if required. Staff who were aware that they may be particularly vulnerable to risks would be advised to raise this with their line manager.

A purge on display screen equipment would also be carried out post move.

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Pleasley Mills

The Health and Safety Officer advised that there were some concerns regarding the vehicular/pedestrian interface between car parks 1 and 2 at Pleasley Mills which were currently under discussion. A priority list had been put together with the estates team which was included in the report. Discussion had taken place with tenants which had improved the safety culture.

Questions were raised with regard to whether there was any conflict between the leisure activities and business activities. The Health and Safety Officer advised that issues had been raised regarding the children on site being in close proximity to industrial vehicular traffic, however the risks were considered manageable.

The committee was advised that Sustainable Communities Scrutiny Committee were currently formulating a report to Executive on these issues.

Health and Safety Training

Members were advised that there had been little feedback from departments on training requirements for staff.

Questions were raised with regard to the Governments' 'Staying Alive' campaign and whether it would be useful to promote this. The Health and Safety Officer advised that some awareness courses could be considered, however there was already an abundance of first aiders per employee.

An explanation was requested in respect of the definition of non licensed asbestos work and the associated safe working practices. The Health and Safety Officer advised that training was currently being sought to advise of the working limitations. It was added that a Risk Assessment should be carried out by relevant managers who had a duty to ensure provisions were in place to protect health and safety regardless of whether the work could legally be carried out by non licensed workers.

It was suggested that one person on each housing team be provided with basic first aid skills. The Health and Safety Officer responded that there were already a number of first aiders however, it could be considered that wardens and rangers work concentrations be looked at so that they would be easily redirected where needed.

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Workrave

This was a free piece of software that could be downloaded onto computers and would prompt users to take a break from the screen. This was thought to help with prevention of RSI. Discussions were taking place with ICT to load this onto all staff PCs.

Hand Arm Vibration (HAVS) update

The Health and Safety Officer advised that the system of hand arm vibration monitoring was being reviewed through discussions with the Director of Neighbourhoods. It was added that the current procedures were labour intensive and there was some doubt as to the accuracy of the readings in comparison to the manufacturer's guidance. Data would be captured from other authorities to determine appropriate levels.

Union representatives commented that the review of the monitoring system was a welcome move as this had been undertaken for 2 to 3 years and the usefulness of continuing the process questionable.

Future External Health and Safety Changes

The Health and Safety Officer provided an update on changes to RIDDOR, Health and Safety First Aid Regulations and HSE fees.

Moved by Councillor D. McGregor, seconded by Councillor B.R. Murray-Carr
RESOLVED that (1) progress on the Activity Audit will be provided by the Health and Safety Officer;

(2) that the benefits to be achieved by the installation of Workrave across all PCs in the Council be noted.

(Health and Safety Officer)

663 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 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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664. ACCIDENT AND STRESS STATISTICS APRIL TO JUNE 2012 EXEMPT – PARAGRAPH 2

The Human Resources Manager presented the report to update the Committee on accident and stress statistics from April to June 2012.

The primary cause of accidents were manual handling, lost time accidents had remained the same for the same period in 2011 and accidents involving the public were down from 38 to 14 year on year. Stress related absence was 112 in 2012 compared to 121 in the same period for 2011.

A detailed breakdown of accidents was included in the agenda for information.

The Human Resources Manager responded to a question in respect of stress related illness raised in the previous minutes. The statistics had been considered and out of the 12 cases of stress related illness, 10 had confirmed that this was non work related with the remaining 2 stating that work pressures were only one contributing factor. Human Resources had worked with all employees in accordance with the Council's sickness absence procedures.

Moved by Councillor D. McGregor, seconded by Councillor K. Walker
RESOLVED that the report be received.

665. ACCIDENT AND STRESS STATISTICS JULY TO SEPTEMBER 2012 EXEMPT – PARAGRAPH 2

The Human Resources Manager presented the report to update the Committee on accident and stress statistics from July to September 2012.

Lost time accidents had increased from 2 to 4 for the same period with stress related absence increasing from 86 in 2011 to 187 in the same period for 2012.

A detailed breakdown of accidents was included in the agenda for information.

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

The Chair wished everyone a merry Christmas and a Happy New Year

The meeting concluded at 1137 hours.