

SAFETY COMMITTEE

Minutes of a meeting of the Safety Committee of the Bolsover District Council held in the Council Chamber, The Arc, on Thursday 28th April 2016 at 1000 hours.

PRESENT:-

Members:- Councillors R.J. Bowler, H.J. Gilmour, A. Joesbury and B.R. Murray-Carr.

UNITE:-

No representatives present.

UNISON:-

K. Shillitto, J. Clayton and W. Edge.

Officers:- S. Barker (Assistant Director – Human Resources), P. Wilmot (Human Resources Manager), M. Spotswood (Health and Safety Advisor), G. Galloway (Assistant Director – Property and Estates) and A. Bluff (Governance Officer).

K. Shillitto in the Chair

0981. APOLOGY

An apology for absence was received on behalf of Councillor C.R. Moesby

0982. URGENT ITEMS OF BUSINESS

There were no urgent items of business to consider.

0983. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made.

0984. MINUTES – 8TH FEBRUARY 2016

Moved by Councillor H.J. Gilmour and seconded by Councillor R.J. Bowler

RESOLVED that the Minutes of a Safety Committee meeting held on 8th February 2016 be approved as a true record.

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0985. SICKNESS ABSENCE/OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH STATISTICS

Committee considered a report of the Assistant Director – Human Resources which provided information regarding Sickness Absence/Occupational Health Statistics for 2015/16 with comparative data from the previous year.

The sickness absence outturn for 2015/16 was 6.28 days compared to a target of 8.5 days. The outturn for the 2014/15 period was 9.20 days. A breakdown of the figures for 2015/16 by department and long term/short term sickness absence was attached to the report for information.

The outcome of occupational health referrals for 2015/16 was; Rehabilitation 29, Outstanding 6, Left the Authority 2.

Comparisons for 2014/15 were; Rehabilitation 39, Outstanding 2, Left the Authority 0.

The top three causes of sickness absence for 2015/16 with days lost was; Stress 555 days lost, Muscular/skeletal 549.5 days lost and Infections 250.5 days lost, totalling 1355 days lost.

Comparisons for 2014/15 were; Muscular/Skeletal 789.5 days lost, Stress 540 days lost, Infections 344 days lost, totalling 1673.5 days lost.

Reasons for long term sickness absence were provided in the report.

Nine employees had undergone counselling during the period.

In response to Members' questions regarding the sickness absence figures for stress, the Human Resources Manager advised the meeting that not all of the absence reported was work related stress, however, the Authority acknowledged that personal stress could impact on an employees work and so provided appropriate support for employees in this situation.

A Unison representative raised that Unison were mindful of work related stress and had carried out a survey in 2015 with employees. Although employees had indicated that extra workloads had not made them sick, it had made them stressed (which could eventually lead to sickness) and Unison were keen to explore how they could support staff by working with management regarding this.

Committee noted that Mental Health Awareness week would take place in May.

A Member queried the sickness absence figure for muscular/skeletal which had reduced by 240 days from the previous year and asked whether this was due to manual handling training. The HR Manager noted that manual handling training had been carried out at a later date and would not have impacted on the figures, however, discussions with the Assistant Director – Streetscene on how to manage this type of absence, without discriminating, had taken place and succession planning had been suggested which could be raised in employee appraisals. The Health and Safety Advisor added that risk perception training had been carried out with Housing Services operatives.

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The Assistant Director – Human Resources reported that the Authority was addressing all of the issues raised, i.e., mental health, stress and supporting an ageing workforce. Meetings were starting to take place with the Chief Executive Officer and Public Health with regards to promoting health and well being in the workplace.

A Member gave brief details of a scheme he was aware of entitled 'a problem shared' where an employee could speak to someone independent at work, in confidence, other than their line manager. A discussion took place about the scheme and Committee felt that this was a good idea which could be introduced at the Authority. A Unison representative also noted that a recent Unison newsletter had listed all support services available to staff from the Council and the Union.

Moved by Councillor H.J. Gilmour and seconded by Councillor R.J. Bowler
RESOLVED that the report be noted.

0986. ACCIDENT STATISTICS

Committee considered a report of the Health and Safety Advisor in relation to accident statistics for the January to March 2016 quarter.

The total number of accidents for the quarter was 28. A breakdown of accident by type was provided in a table and graph format which included the split between employee (operational area) accidents (8) and public accidents (20).

The main causes of employee accidents in the quarter was 'struck against fixed objects' (44%), manual handling (14%), slips, trips and fall (on same level) (14%), falls from height (14%) and other (14%).

The number of employee accidents recorded in the quarter showed a 50% reduction over the same period in 2014/15, however, the number of lost time incidents had risen.

The number of days lost, recorded in the January to March quarter, had significantly reduced from the same period in 2015. The total days lost in 2015/2016 was 72.5 days being a reduction on the figure of 150 days for 2014/2015.

The overall number of accidents in the quarter had fallen by 13.5% compared to the same period in 2014/2015.

Public accidents accounted for 71.4% of the total accidents in the January to March 2016 quarter compared to 50% of all accidents recorded in the same period in 2014/2015.

Housing Services (50%) and Street Scene (37.3%) remained the operational areas with the highest number of accidents occurring in the quarter, though the actual number of accidents occurring in both sections had reduced over the same period last year.

The root cause of employee accidents were Lack of Risk Perception (75%), Individual Physical Capabilities (12.5%) and Tool/Equipment Defect Keeping (12.5%).

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The Health and Safety Advisor noted that bump caps had been issued to Housing Services Operatives. These were a type of baseball cap with a protective peak and headwear which minimised risk of accidents. Risk perception training had also been carried out and this should contribute towards seeing a reduction in accidents involving 'strikes against fixed objects'.

One accident had been RIDDOR reportable and now every individual public accident was reported.

Moved by Councillor R.J. Bowler and seconded by Councillor H.J. Gilmour
RESOLVED that the report be noted.

0987. HEALTH AND SAFETY REPORT

Committee considered a report of the Health and Safety Officer which provided an update on Health and Safety Performance since the last meeting.

Employee Protection Register

Three names had been added to the employee protection register with ten names removed. As a result of this exercise the total number of addresses now held on the register was twenty four.

In response to a Member's query, the Health and Safety Advisor confirmed that locations were also included on the Protection Register.

Health and Safety Action Plan

To be reported on as the next agenda item below.

Workplace Inspections

All scheduled workplace inspections had been carried out with the exception of the Riverside Depot which had been rescheduled.

Near Miss/ Learning Events

There had been 2 near miss incidents or learning events reported in the period. Both related to blocking of walkways within the archive room at Riverside Depot. A general tidy of the area had been conducted with a monitoring regime put in place and all users of the room had been reminded of the importance of good housekeeping standards.

Moved by Councillor H.J. Gilmour and seconded by Councillor R.J. Bowler
RESOLVED that the report be received.

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0988. NEW HEALTH AND SAFETY ACTION PLAN FOR 2016/17

A table attached as an appendix to the Health and Safety report above provided key targets for the Council's health and safety provision for the period April 2016 to March 2017 with outstanding actions from the 2015/16 Action Plan being carried over. All details were included on the Action Plan.

It was noted that the action plan was not exhaustive and any issues that may arise during the year could be included on the plan.

A Member queried responsibility for fire evacuation procedures for the tenant on the top floor of the Arc. The Assistant Director – Property and Estates replied that a date would be set for the next fire drill and any issues found with the tenant's fire evacuation procedure would be fed back to the tenant.

Moved by Councillor H.J. Gilmour and seconded by Councillor R.J. Bowler
RESOLVED that the report be received.

0989. HSE REPORT UPDATE

The Health and Safety Advisor provided a verbal update to the meeting in relation to a recent HSE intervention following an incident.

The Health and Safety Advisor reported that provision put in place by the Housing Services team since the incident would stand up to best practice.

Moved and seconded
RESOLVED that the update be received.

The meeting concluded at 1100 hours.