

## **SAFETY COMMITTEE**

Minutes of a meeting of the Safety Committee of the Bolsover District Council held in the Council Chamber, The Arc, Clowne on Monday 7<sup>th</sup> November 2016 at 1000 hours.

### **PRESENT:-**

Members:- Councillors H.J. Gilmour, B.R. Murray-Carr and M.J. Ritchie.

UNITE:- No representatives present.

UNISON:- K. Shillitto and J. Woods.

Officers:- S. Barker (Assistant Director - HR & Payroll), P. Wilmot (Human Resources Manager), M. Spotswood (Health and Safety Advisor), S. Brunt (Assistant Director - Streetscene) and A. Bluff (Governance Officer).

### **0417. ELECTION OF CHAIR FOR THE ENSUING YEAR**

Moved by Councillor J. Ritchie and seconded by Councillor H.J. Gilmour

**RESOLVED** that Councillor B.R. Murray-Carr be elected Chair of Safety Committee for the ensuing year.

### **0418. APPOINTMENT OF VICE CHAIR (UNISON SIDE)**

Moved by Councillor H.J. Gilmour and seconded by J. Woods

**RESOLVED** that K. Shillitto (Unison) be appointed Vice Chair of Safety Committee for the ensuing year.

### **0419. APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillors R.J. Bowler and A. Joesbury, L. Hickin (Assistant Director of Leisure) and J. Clayton (Unison).

### **0420. URGENT ITEMS OF BUSINESS**

There were no urgent items of business to consider.

### **0421. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest made.

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### 0422. MINUTES – 28<sup>TH</sup> APRIL 2016

Moved by Councillor H.J. Gilmour and seconded by K. Shillitto

**RESOLVED** that the Minutes of a Safety Committee held on 28<sup>th</sup> April 2016 be approved as a correct record.

### 0423. SICKNESS ABSENCE /OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH STATISTICS – APRIL TO JUNE 2016

Committee considered a report which provided information on Sickness Absence/Occupational Health Statistics for the first quarter period; April to June 2016, with comparative data from the previous year.

Sickness absence was increasing and the number of occupational health referrals had also increased.

The sickness absence outturn figure for April to June 2016 was 1.92 days per full time employee against a target of 2.12 days. The outturn figure for the same quarter in 2015 was 1.35 days.

A breakdown of the figures by department and by long term/short term sickness absence was attached to the report for Committee's information.

The outcome of occupational health referrals for the quarter with comparisons for 2015 was as follows;

	April to June 2016	April to June 2015
Rehabilitated	6	1
Continuing	10	0
Left Authority	2	0
<b>Totals</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>1</b>

The top three causes of sickness absence for the quarter with comparative data for the same period in 2015 was as follows:

	April to June 2016 Days Lost		April to June 2015 Days Lost
Muscular/skeletal	186.5	Back/Neck	103.5
Stress	165.5	Stress	94.5
Other	150.5	Other	77
<b>Totals Days Lost</b>	<b>502.5</b>		<b>275</b>

A breakdown of the reasons for all long term sickness absence for July to September 2016 with comparative data for the same period in 2015 was included in the report for Committee's information.

There had been 3 employees undergoing counselling during this period.

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The figures for Stress Related Illness by Directorate were included in the report for Committee's information.

In response to a Member's query, the HR Manager replied that most of the sickness absence relating to stress was due to home life stress and these employees were being given the best support to help them get back to work. The 'Employee Assistance Programme' report, which was an item on the agenda, would cover the types of assistance available to staff, including stress related sickness.

Moved by Councillor H.J. Gilmour and seconded by K. Shillitto  
**RESOLVED** that the report be received.

### **0424. SICKNESS ABSENCE /OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH STATISTICS – JULY TO SEPTEMBER 2016**

Committee considered a report which provided information on Sickness Absence/Occupational Health Statistics for the second quarter period; July to September 2016, with comparative data from the previous year.

The sickness absence outturn figure for July to September 2016 was 2.74 days per full time employee against a target of 2.12 days. The outturn figure for the same quarter in 2015 was 1.49 days.

A breakdown of the figures by department and by long term/short term sickness absence was attached to the report for Committee's information

The outcome of occupational health referrals for the quarter with comparisons for 2015 was as follows;

	July to September 2016	July to September 2015
Rehabilitated	13	0
Continuing	9	1
Left Authority	3	0
<b>Totals</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>1</b>

The top three causes of sickness absence for the quarter with comparative data for the same period in 2015 were as follows:

	July to September 2016 Days Lost		July to September 2015 Days Lost
Muscular/skeletal	296	Muscular/skeletal	119
Stress	258	Stress	180
Other	136	Other	69.5
<b>Totals Days Lost</b>	<b>690</b>		<b>368.5</b>

A breakdown of the reasons for all long term sickness absence for July to September 2016 with comparative data for the same period in 2015 was included in the report for Committee's information.

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There had been 3 employees undergoing counselling during this period.

The figures for stress related illness by Directorate was included in the report for Committee's information.

In response to a Unison representative's query, the HR Manager replied that to identify stress and muscular/skeletal issues in advance of them happening was difficult; reliance was put on employees completing health surveillance questionnaires and also one to one appraisals etc.

The Health and Safety Advisor noted that manual handling training and risk perception training was also carried out with employees.

The Assistant Director HR & Payroll added that a piece of work was necessary on the reasons used for sickness absence, for example, leave to care for someone who was ill or planned medical treatment. Policies would need looking at to allow more flexibility and sensitivity for staff in these types of circumstances.

Moved by Councillor H.J. Gilmour and seconded by Councillor J. Ritchie  
**RESOLVED** that the report be noted.

### **0425. ACCIDENTS STATISTICS – APRIL TO JUNE 2016**

Committee considered a report in relation to accident statistics for the quarter period April to June 2016.

The total number of all accidents for the quarter was 34. A breakdown of accident by type was provided in a table and graph format which included the split between employee (operational area) accidents (9) and public accidents (25).

The main causes of employee accidents in the quarter was lack of risk perception (33.35%), other (3 different incidents) (33.35%), strike against a fixed object (22.2%) and animal bite (11.1%). It was noted that there had been a substantial reduction in manual handling accidents in the first quarter and this was due to training which had been provided to staff. However, public accidents had risen and it was felt that this was down to better recording of accidents.

The number of employee accidents recorded in the quarter was 10% less than the figure recorded in the same period in 2015/16. The number of days lost in the quarter had significantly reduced from the same period in 2015/16 with 60.5 days recorded compared to zero being recorded in 2016/2017.

The overall number of accidents within the Authority in the first quarter had risen by 61.9% compared to the same period in 2015/16. The increase was largely due to a 227% rise in the number of public accidents reported however most of these were of a very minor nature and monitoring was being carried out to ensure that there were no underlying issues. In 2015/2016 public accidents accounted for 52.3% of all accidents recorded in the first quarter, whereas in the current year, public accidents accounted for 73.5.3% of the total.

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Street Scene (77.7%) remained the operational area with the highest number of accidents occurring in the quarter however this was very much in line with the risk profile of the service.

The main root causes of employee accidents was lack of risk perception (55.5%), individual factors (22.2%), organisational factors and third party (11.1%).

Moved by Councillor B.R. Murray-Carr and seconded by Councillor J. Ritchie  
**RESOLVED** that the report be noted.

### **0426. ACCIDENT STATISTICS – JULY TO SEPTEMBER 2016**

Committee considered a report in relation to accident statistics for the quarter period July to September 2016.

The total number of all accidents for the quarter was 29. A breakdown of accident by type was provided in a table and graph format which included the split between employee (operational area) accidents (13) and public accidents (16).

The main causes of employee accidents in the second quarter was slips, trips & fall (53.8%), manual handling and struck by moving objects (15.4%), strike against fixed objects and contact with hazardous substance (7.7%).

The number of employee accidents recorded in the second quarter had remained consistent with the figures for 2015/16. The number of days lost recorded in the second quarter had significantly increased from 1 day in 2015/2016 to 84 days in 2016/2017.

The overall number of accidents within the Authority in the second quarter had risen by 31.8% compared to the same period in 2015/16.

In 2015/2016 public accidents accounted for 40.9% of all accidents recorded in the second quarter, whereas in the current year public accidents accounted for 55.2% of the total.

Housing Services (46.2%) and Street Scene (38.5%) remained the operational areas with the highest number of accidents occurring in the quarter however as previously reported this was in line with the risk profile of the services.

The main root cause of employee accidents in the second quarter was lack of risk perception (53.8%), organisational factors (23.1%), individual factors (15.4%) and third party (7.7%).

Moved by Councillor B.R. Murray-Carr and seconded by Councillor J. Ritchie  
**RESOLVED** that the report be noted.

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### **0427. HEALTH AND SAFETY REPORT**

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

#### Employee Protection Register

Five names had been added to the Employee Protection Register with three names removed. However, since the report had been produced a further three names were to be added to the Register; this would bring the total to 29.

#### Work Place Inspections

All work place inspections were either complete, in progress or scheduled to be carried out.

In response to a Member's query, the Assistant Director – Property and Estates reported that he had arranged for essential repairs to be carried out at Ashbourne Court, Shirebrook.

A Member raised concern that she had witnessed a 'near miss' incident at the Arc where a visitor had been almost hit in the face by the delay of the automatic doors opening at the front of the building. The Health and Safety Advisor replied that he would request Property and Estates to inspect the doors and also that warning signs be put in place in the interim.

#### Health and Safety Training

It was noted that a number of staff had not completed training; however, this was being addressed with the help of the Customer Service and Improvement Team.

#### Near Miss/ Learning Events

There had been no near miss / learning events reported in the quarter period.

Moved by Councillor B.R. Murray-Carr and seconded by Councillor J. Ritchie **RESOLVED** that the report be noted.

### **0428. EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAMME**

Committee considered a report regarding an Employee Assistance Programme (EAP), which would be introduced across both councils as part of the commitment to improving employee health and well-being and also to potentially assist in reducing sickness absence.

Strategic Alliance Management Team had agreed to the introduction of an Employee Assistance Programme which was offered by many employers and was a cost-effective way of providing access to a wide range of confidential services either over the telephone and/or on-line. It was intended to help employees deal with personal problems that may adversely impact their work performance, health and well-being.

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Employee Assistance Programmes had been proven to reduce absence by 34% on average, (CBI Absence Survey), improve productivity in the work place, reduce stress in employees, improve staff retention and demonstrate a caring approach towards employees.

Typically EAPs would include;

- Legal information
- Financial advice
- Comprehensive telephone help-lines available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, for issues such as relationships, domestic abuse/violence, elderly care, gambling addiction etc
- Structured Counselling (via telephone)
- Critical incident advice
- GP call back and Medical information
- Employment advice
- On-line Health Assessments
- On-line Stress Coaching tool

In terms of publicising the EAP, information had been advertised on the Council's intranet and Managers would relay in staff meetings; posters and leaflets had been produced for the Depot staff that did not have access to the intranet and reminders would be put in all employees' payslips.

Committee welcomed the report and felt the programme would help staff to be able to deal with issues individually instead of going through the Council's system. The Assistant Director HR & Payroll added that Health and Wellbeing champions were also being considered.

### **0429. FIRE ALARM SYSTEM AND EMERGENCY LIGHTING AT RIVERSIDE DEPOT**

Committee considered a report which raised awareness of issues regarding fire safety compliance at the Riverside Depot and also an update on the actions taken to address the issues.

There had been two fire compliance issues at Riverside Depot; the fire alarm provision and the emergency lighting provision.

Fire alarm provision - three fire panels served the Riverside Depot site with the main panel located in the reception foyer and two secondary panels; one located in central control and one in the garage block.

A recent issue with the main fire panel had caused it to periodically activate a fault buzzer. An engineer had attended the site and identified a faulty battery which he temporarily fixed.

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Whilst on site, the engineer had checked the other two panels and found the garage block fire panel to be totally blank. Further tests revealed that although power was entering the panel, no power was flowing out and this was not showing a fault on the system.

In respect of the fire compliance issues, the following steps had been taken;

- A temporary fire procedure had been adapted for the garage block.
- Air horns had been purchased and strategically placed around the premise for raising the alarm in the event of an emergency.
- Battery operated smoke detectors had been installed at strategic locations within the Garage block to provide a warning system. (This was not possible in the Garage Area)
- Work patterns had been amended to ensure that all hot works were terminated at least 1 hour 30 minutes before the end of a shift.
- New end of shift monitoring processes had been introduced as a temporary measure.
- Increased levels of employee vigilance had been encouraged.
- Remedial work on the panel had been scheduled for 7<sup>th</sup> November 2016.

Emergency lighting provision – the Health and Safety Advisor had raised concerns in respect of the annual 3 hour emergency light discharge test, which upon completion, was not possible to say how much charge was left in the battery.

It was a legal requirement that emergency lights remained illuminated for a period of 1 hour after activation of the alarm system and this could not be guaranteed until the emergency light batteries had recharged. As the process took a number of hours, the building would not be fully fire compliant during that time.

Discussions with Property and Estates had arrived at a solution where areas with natural daylight could be tested in working hours and other areas tested out of hours.

Monthly flick tests had continued and a number of lights/fittings had been identified with problems but no remedial work had been undertaken. This posed serious concerns over the current level of emergency lighting available for staff.

The cost to replace/repair the inoperative fittings amounted to an approximate cost of £21,000

In respect of the emergency lighting issues, the following steps had been taken;

- Remedial work on emergency lighting to commence on 31<sup>st</sup> October 2016.
- The Health and Safety team to review all fire escape routes to ensure minimum levels of emergency lighting were being maintained.

It was noted that the fire system was a closed system and could only be worked on by the company who were under contract to carry out works.

The Assistant Director - Streetscene noted that the Depot had recently been struck by lightning and this could have caused the problems concerned.

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It was agreed that the Head of Housing be invited to attend an Asset Management Group and/or Cabinet to discuss the scope of utilising Housing operatives to carry out this type of maintenance work in the future.

Moved by Councillor H. Gilmour and seconded by K. Shillitto

**RESOLVED** that (1) the report be noted,

(2) the Head of Housing be invited to attend an Asset Management Group and/or Cabinet to discuss the scope of utilising Housing operatives to carry out this type of maintenance work in the future.

(Health and Safety Advisor/Assistant Director - Property and Estates)

### **0430.           LEGIONELLA – GROUP DWELLINGS**

The Health and Safety Advisor presented a report to make Committee aware of issues relating to Legionella compliance within the Authority and what actions had been taken.

At a recent Asset Management Group, concerns had been raised with regard to long term outstanding actions in respect of Legionella management, which were as follows;

- 175 High Priority
- 48 Medium Priority
- 16 Low Priority

However, it was believed that a number of actions had been completed but not signed off on the system. Further, a number of the actions applied to multiple sites, for example, training to site staff, and this would remove approximately 15 actions at once.

Regular meetings had been held with Housing Services, Property & Estates and Health and Safety to push actions forward. Further proposed actions were to request individuals with outstanding actions to;

- review their status
- complete any actions that could be closed out
- provide reasons for any outstanding actions with potential target completion dates
- convene a meeting one week prior to the Asset Management Group to track progress

Committee requested that an update be provided to the next meeting of Safety Committee.

Moved by Councillor J. Ritchie and seconded by Councillor K. Shillitto

**RESOLVED** that (1) the report be noted,

(2) An update be provided to the next meeting of Safety Committee.

The meeting concluded at 1150 hours.