

CLIMATE CHANGE AND COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of a meeting of the Climate Change and Communities Scrutiny Committee of the Bolsover District Council held in the Council Chamber, The Arc, Clowne on Tuesday, 20th February 2024 at 10:45 hours.

PRESENT:-

Members:-

Councillor Ashley Taylor in the Chair

Councillors Rob Hiney-Saunders, Cathy Jeffery, and Emma Stevenson.

Officers:- Steve Brunt (Strategic Director of Services), Lindsay Delamore (Licensing and Enforcement Officer), Thomas Dunne-Wragg (Scrutiny Officer), Jim Fieldsend (Monitoring Officer), Charmaine Terry (Environmental Health Team Manager - Licensing), Peter Wilmot (HR Business Partner), Joanne Wilson (Housing Strategy and Development Officer), Matthew Kerry (Governance and Civic Officer) and Alison Bluff (Governance).

Also in attendance at the meeting was Councillor Anne Clarke, Portfolio Holder for Environment.

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absences were received on behalf of Councillors Janet Tait and Carol Wood.

URGENT ITEMS OF BUSINESS

There were no urgent items of business to consider.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

MINUTES – 5TH DECEMBER 2023

Moved by Councillor Rob Hiney-Saunders and seconded by Councillor Emma Stevenson **RESOLVED** that the Minutes of a Climate Change & Communities Scrutiny Committee held on 5th December 2023 be approved as a true and correct record.

HEALTH AND WELLBEING FRAMEWORK UPDATE

Committee considered a detailed report which provided an update on the Council's progress in promoting and engaging Health and Wellbeing for employees.

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The Health and Wellbeing Framework had been agreed in 2017 and described how employees would be supported to ensure a healthy, motivated, and high performing workforce to achieve the Council's aims and priorities. A copy of the updated Framework (2023) was attached at Appendix 1 to the report.

A key feature of the Framework was the action plan, which detailed the three key aims, namely:

- Create a Healthy Work Environment
- Develop a supportive Workplace Culture
- Encourage employee engagement in healthy lifestyles

Work continued with the Council's Senior Leadership Team, Service Managers, and employees to ensure steps were being taken to achieve the above aims and a number of significant activities had taken place, which were outlined in the report.

In relation to employee sickness absence, the report noted that in the last financial year the sickness absence out-turn figure was 9.4 days lost per employee. This was an increase on the previous year and was over the target of 8.5 days per employee. Due to the Covid 19 Pandemic, many additional sickness days were taken whilst requirements were in place for employees to self-isolate with some employees not able to work from home (1.6 days per employee).

The actions currently being taken to address sickness absence were set out in the report. However, it was recognised there was still further work to be done. The importance of Health and Wellbeing for employees at BDC was very much recognised by the HR and Payroll Manager and HR Business Partner, both of whom had a responsibility to deliver continuing progress in supporting the wellbeing of others.

A Member noted that for the past three quarters, stress and depression were the main issues for sickness absence and he felt that a richer data set was needed to better explore why this was; i.e., employee surveys. He also queried if the new Employee Engagement Officer would carry out any investigations.

The HR Business Partner agreed that more information was needed and noted that stress and depression had been in the top three issues for sickness absence over the last four years. When the newly appointed Employee Engagement Officer was in post, this was something they could look at.

A Member queried the number of staff who had taken up physio examinations. He also expressed his concern on the low number of take up for flu vaccinations (67) and queried if this had been extended to all staff.

The HR Business Partner confirmed that the offer of flu vaccinations was intended for staff over the age of 60. HR staff carried out promotional work in relation to the offer and 67 was an increase in take up on previous years. Free eye tests were available for staff including discounts on new eyewear for display screen equipment (DSE) purposes.

In response to another Member's query, the HR Business Partner advised that there were no recognised mental health first aid champions currently at the Council, however, again, this was something the Employee Engagement Officer could look at when they were in post. He added that the Council also offered an Employee Assistant Programme

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by way of a 24/7 telephone counselling service which covered a range of issues, including financial counselling.

Moved by Councillor Rob Hiney-Saunders and seconded by Councillor Emma Stevenson.

RESOLVED that the update on the Health and Wellbeing Framework be noted.

LIST OF KEY DECISIONS AND ITEMS TO BE CONSIDERED IN PRIVATE

Committee considered the List of Key Decisions and Items to be considered in private document.

Moved by Councillor Rob Hiney-Saunders and seconded by Councillor Emma Stevenson.

RESOLVED that the List of Key Decisions and Items to be Considered in Private document be noted.

FIRE SAFETY POLICY

Committee's views were sought in relation to the Council's revised Fire Safety Policy before submission to Executive on 4th March.

The Government had published new guidance on the enhanced duties of responsible persons under amendments of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 and Building Safety Act 2022 (S156) applying to all non-domestic premises where people worked, visited, or resided, including parts of multi-occupied residential buildings, communal corridors, stairs, and plant rooms.

It was a legal requirement to have a Fire Safety Policy and to monitor compliance with its implementation. Failure to approve and adopt the Fire Safety Policy would place the Council in a position of non-compliance, presenting risk of enforcement action by the Derbyshire Fire & Rescue Service (Fire Safety Officer) for failure to comply with and/or breaching requirements of the Fire Safety Order.

In response to a Member's query, the Strategic Director of Services advised that the policy did not apply to individual properties, i.e. Council houses.

In response to a Member's query, the Strategic Director of Services advised that the Health and Safety Team were creating an information and training pack, and this would also be made available to Parish/Town Councils.

An error in the Housing Group Dwelling Premise Locations was noted in that Mill Lane, Clowne should read Mill lane, Whitwell.

Members were advised that when adopted, the policy would be reviewed periodically thereafter.

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Moved by Councillor Rob Hiney-Saunders and seconded by Councillor Emma Stevenson
RESOLVED the revised Fire Safety Policy be noted.

SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME 2023/24

Committee considered their Work Programme 2023/24.

Moved by Councillor Rob Hiney-Saunders and seconded by Councillor Emma Stevenson
RESOLVED that the Work Programme 2023/24 be noted.

The formal part of the meeting concluded at 10:52 hours and Members then met as a working party to continue their review work. The informal meeting closed at 12:25 hours.