

**SAFETY ADVISORY GROUP
(Report of the Advisory Group)**

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Advisory Group met on 13th September 2006 and Councillors A Hansard, K Reynolds (Chairman) and L M Simpson were present.
- 1.2 Also in attendance were P Corley, P J Duerden, N Martlew, A Stewart and Mrs C Rowland.
- 1.3 The Staff Side representatives in attendance were K Lawson and C Sneesby.
- 1.4 Apologies for absence from the meeting were submitted on behalf of Councillors J W Davies and Mrs D Collins, Mr S Richardson, Mrs T Davidson and Mrs G Smith.

2. REPORT OF THE ADVISORY GROUP

- 2.1 The report of the meeting of the Advisory Group held on the 14th June 2006 was received and noted.

3. MEMBERS' INTERESTS

- 3.1 No declarations of interest were received.

4. AD-HOC SAFETY REPORT: 4TH JULY 2006

- 4.1 The Group received and noted a report by the Head of Administration outlining the observations and comments made by the Group during an ad-hoc inspection of the Swimming Pool and Impressions Fitness Suite at Huntingdon Leisure Centre on the 4th July 2006. The Group acknowledged that, overall, the findings of the inspection had been very positive and demonstrated that the facilities were well managed.

5. VIOLENCE AT WORK

- 5.1 The Group received and noted a report by the Head of HR & Payroll Services outlining 7 incidents of "violence at work" at the District Council since the preparation of the last report in March 2004. The Group noted that, overall, there had been a reduction in the number of recorded incidents.
- 5.2 Following a meeting of a working group that morning, the Health & Safety Adviser acquainted the Group with progress achieved in the creation of a Violent Incident Register, such that details of certain more serious violent incidents would soon be made available to District Council employees via the Council's intranet and possibly the GIS system. The creation of a register had been delayed because of concerns surrounding the Council's compliance with the Data Protection Act and the aggressor's human rights.

- 5.3 Arising from concerns expressed by Members that aggressors' names could be removed from the register if the violence ceased, the Group were informed that, whilst this was possible, a stringent management regime for reviewing the register was required to be introduced to deal with this and other issues.
- 5.4 In considering the mechanism by which aggressors' details would be included on the register, Members noted that this was subject to Data Protection and Human Rights legislation. A senior officer within the organisation should be nominated to oversee the process undertaken by a small team of officers who would determine the inclusion and removal of violent incidents via a risk assessment process. A report on the progress this project would be submitted to the Group's next meeting.
- 5.5 Whilst Members had expressed concern in relation to one incident at the Leisure Centres when a decision was taken not to involve the Police, it was subsequently acknowledged, in the light of a detailed account of the incident, that Police attendance was not appropriate in the circumstances. The Group has recommended that in future incidents the Police should be involved where possible.

6. ANNUAL ACCIDENT REPORTS

(a) District Council Employees

- 6.1 The Group received and noted a report by the Head of HR & Payroll Services summarising and comparing accident data and statistics for 2005/6 compared to previous years. In so doing, the Group noted that the total number of accidents across the Council had risen by 15 when compared to the previous year although all injuries had been of a minor nature. The Group's attention was also drawn to trends demonstrated in accidents over the year.
- 6.2 In expressing their disappointment at the increase, Members suggested that consideration may need to be given to an increase in expenditure on Health & Safety training or the introduction of "drip feed" sessions to reinforce the safety culture to employees. The Group noted that the Head of Operations had asked the Health & Safety Adviser to provide a number of tool box sessions to employees at the Depot. In the ensuing discussions, Members acknowledged that it was difficult to establish whether the figures were being skewed by an increase in the number of accidents being reported, particularly in the light of efforts being made by the Council to promote the reporting of accidents by employees.
- 6.3 Having acknowledged the need to keep a watchful eye on the situation and in discussing the best means of presenting information to them, the Group asked the Health & Safety Adviser to incorporate ratios in future reports detailing the number of accidents per 100 employees, both in total and by Directorate.

(b) Leisure Centre Staff

- 6.4 A report by the Leisure Centres' Health & Safety Co-ordinator detailing the results of the annual accident summary at Leisure Centres also was presented. In so doing, the Group noted a similar increase in the total number of accidents involving employees but a reduction in frequency when compared to the previous year with 18 out of a total of 33 being of a minor nature. The Group was pleased to note the year on year reduction in the number of non employee related accidents.

7. ACCIDENT REPORTS

(a) District Council Employees

- 7.1 The Group received and noted a report by the Head of HR & Payroll Services giving details of 23 accidents and 1 incident involving employees, together with 2 accidents and 1 incident involving non employees which had taken place since the previous meeting. The Group were pleased to note that the comments in the 'action taken' column now provided a much more detailed account of the circumstances in each case.
- 7.2 In considering the contents of the report, Members commented upon the number of incidents involving refuse workers and suggested that consideration might need to be given to devoting more resources to the Operations Division. Suggestions were made about the need for regular training sessions in this area to try to persuade all employees to think safer. Having noted that employees at the Depot were encouraged to report all incidents, Members suggested that this ought not to be discouraged as this would represent a backwards move but the situation should continue to be monitored and a technique of "drip feed" training implemented.
- 7.3 In respect of injuries involving animals, the Health & Safety Adviser agreed to consider the inclusion of some of these on the Violent Incident Register.

(b) Leisure Centre Employees

- 7.4 The Group also received a report by the Leisure Centres' Health & Safety Co-ordinator detailing accidents which had been reported at the Leisure Centres since the last meeting.
- 7.5 In considering the specific accidents within the report, the Group has noted that the booking system at the Huntingdon Centre had been reviewed so there would be no future incidences of table tennis tables being carried upstairs.

8. HEALTH & SAFETY TRAINING

- 8.1 The Group were acquainted by means of a report by the Head of HR & Payroll Services outlining health and safety training courses which had been held since the previous meeting of the Group.
- 8.2 In considering the format of the report the Group discussed whether it still required information to highlight where training needs had been

identified but not yet carried out. It was generally concluded that Members were happy to receive the statistics across the organisation as a whole in future reports.

- 8.3 The Group discussed the provision of Health & Safety induction training for new starters and expressed concerns about the need to provide this training, which was compulsory in a timely manner. Concerns were also expressed that the Health & Safety Adviser was the only resource available for the formal Corporate Health & Safety Induction and it was suggested that this could be a potential role for the Health & Safety Co-ordinators. Having acknowledged that specific Health & Safety training must be provided before the commencement of duties in high risk activities, the Group expressed their concerns that in other areas of the Council it could not be guaranteed that employees would receive a basic level of Health & Safety awareness within a two month period. In response to particular concerns raised concerning temporary and agency staff, the Health & Safety Adviser agreed to look into the situation.
- 8.4 The Group requested a report to be prepared on the Health & Safety induction system for consideration at a future meeting to address the issues identified.

9. PROVISION OF HEALTH & SAFETY INSTRUCTION AND TRAINING

- 9.1 The Group considered a report by the Unison Safety Officer seeking their support for a review and evaluation of the existing arrangements for the provision of instruction, training and supervision for those workers for whom English is not their first language. If necessary, the report proposed the provision of resources in their first language.
- 9.2 Having endorsed the contents of the report, the Group agreed that consideration as to how best means to progress this work should be undertaken by the Health & Safety Adviser, Mr K Lawson and Mr A Stewart with a further report to be submitted to a future meeting of the Advisory Group.
- 9.3 The Group agreed that this subject also should be considered for inclusion in a future workplace inspection.

10. PROPOSED FUTURE AD-HOC SAFETY INSPECTION DATES

- 10.1 The Group suggested the following dates for an ad-hoc safety inspection in October -
- ◆ 16th October 2006 – morning:
 - ◆ 18th October 2006 – all day

(Subsequently the inspection was rescheduled for 9am on 25th October 2006.)

K Reynolds
Chairman of the Advisory Group