

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

**1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 The Advisory Group met on 19th May 2004 and Councillors J W Davies, A Hansard and L M Simpson were present.
- 1.2 The Staff Side representatives in attendance were C Sneesby and C Douglas.
- 1.3 Apologies for absence from the meeting were submitted on behalf of Councillors K Reynolds and Messrs K Lawson and A Chabot.
- 1.4 The report of the meeting of the Advisory Group held on 3rd March 2004 was received and noted.

**2. 145 BROADWAY, YAXLEY**

- 2.1 By way of a report by the Commercial Services Manager, the Group were updated with an incident that had serious Health and Safety implications which had taken place at 145 Broadway, Yaxley on the 13th April 2004.
- 2.2 The Group were advised that the property had been found to be “filthy and verminous” and had taken four men, four days to clear the property entirely. Amongst the general debris removed were a large number of dangerous wild animals many of which were dead and were dealt with by qualified personnel.
- 2.3 The Group were also advised that a live grenade had been discovered at the property which has been disposed of safely by the bomb disposal squad.
- 2.4 The Group placed on record their gratitude for the commendable actions of the staff involved and their level of expertise that had ensured their own safety in a dangerous situation and the safety of the other services in attendance at the incident.

**3. REVIEW OF HEALTH AND SAFETY BY ZURICH MUNICIPAL**

- 3.1 Consideration was given to a report by the Head of Personnel Services that drew Members’ attention to a review of the Council’s management of Health and Safety carried out by Zurich Municipal. The document was commissioned to assist with future Strategic Planning, ensure that existing management systems were effective and that the necessary health and safety legislation was complied with by the Council.
- 3.2 Interviews had been carried out by Zurich Municipal with seven senior Managers and one Health and Safety Co-ordinator in an attempt to establish the way in which the Council’s existing arrangements for the

management of Health and Safety and risk assessment were perceived by its staff. A number of employees were also interviewed during the inspection by Zurich Municipal at various Council owned sites.

- 3.3 The Group were acquainted with the summaries and conclusions of the review and particular attention was drawn to the management of contractors by the Council. Members were reminded that contractors' basic Health and Safety compliance was vetted by the Sinclair Directory providing that the contract value was in excess of £30,000. The review advised that similar checks should be introduced throughout the Council for high risk contracts below this contract value.
- 3.4 The Group were also acquainted with the recommendation of the report that the competence of Health and Safety professionals should be raised, ie
- ◆ Health and Safety Advisers – NEBOSH Diploma;
  - ◆ Leisure Centres Health and Safety Co-ordinator – NEBOSH Diploma;
  - ◆ Health and Safety Co-ordinators – NEBOSH Certificate.

#### **4. ERGONOMIC ASSESSMENT OF REFUSE COLLECTION**

- 4.1 Attention was drawn to an ergonomic assessment of the work undertaken by employees of the Council's Operations Division which has been carried out by WorkSafe. The Study was commissioned to determine whether the physical intensity of collecting refuse in black sacks might be causing employees to suffer long term muscular skeletal disorders.
- 4.2 Representatives from WorkSafe had monitored one team of three refuse collectors for one day and it was noted that this was not a large enough sample to allow significant data to be obtained but had led to a number of recommendations being made to the Council.
- 4.3 Whilst the aerobic fitness for the sample was noted as 'average to good' for adults of their age, concern was raised by Members that loaders often ran rather than walked as this may have an adverse effect on the wear and tear of their joints.
- 4.4 In that context, the Group were advised that the recommendations of the report sought protective, flexible and well cushioned shoes for refuse collectors to improve shock absorption and pressure on joints from walking long distances each day. In response to the report, the Head of Operations advised that such shoes were difficult to source owing to the number of Health and Safety restrictions on such items and agreed that cushioned insoles may be a more effective solution.

## **5. INSTITUTE OF OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH – SUPERVISING SAFELY**

- 5.1 Following the successful completion of the IOSH Supervising Safely qualification by a number of employees, the Group agreed that a formal presentation of certificates should be arranged and that a notice be placed on the intranet identifying those now qualified.

## **6. FIRE DRILL – PATHFINDER AND CASTLE HILL HOUSE**

- 6.1 The Group received and noted a report by the Head of Personnel Services detailing a routine fire drill which had been undertaken at Pathfinder and Castle Hill House on the 26th March 2004.
- 6.2 In addition to previous fire drills the alarms had not been switched off for the duration of the evacuation in Pathfinder House to avoid employees from Castle Hill House and others entering the building through the rear doors as they were unaware of the preceding evacuation.
- 6.3 In spite of the blockages being placed in the main stairwell of Pathfinder House and two locations in Castle Hill House the evacuations were completed in 3 minutes and 2.5 minutes respectively.
- 6.4 The Group noted a number of observations that had been made during and after the fire drill and particular attention was drawn to a revision in the way in which external users of the Council's meeting rooms are advised of the fire procedure.

## **7. AD HOC SAFETY INSPECTION**

- 7.1 Consideration was given to a report by the Head of Administration regarding the observations and comments made by the Group during an Ad Hoc Safety Inspection held on the 21st April 2004.
- 7.2 An addition to the comments made during the inspection, the Health and Safety Adviser reported that whilst the aggressor who had smashed windows in Pathfinder House had been remanded in custody until the 10th June 2004 when he would be sentenced, it was possible that he had already served his sentence whilst in custody.
- 7.3 The Health and Safety Adviser reported that the Council had asked the Crown Prosecution Service for an Anti Social Behaviour Order to be placed on the aggressor. She agreed to keep the Group updated with the situation.
- 7.4 The Group received and noted the comments arising from the Ad Hoc Safety Inspection in relation to the violent incident and the St Ivo Leisure Centre.

**8. DATE OF A HEALTH AND SAFETY INSPECTION AT A COUNCIL PREMISES**

- 8.1 In view of the closeness of the European Elections, it was agreed that Members of the Group when appointed by the Cabinet, should be contacted with regard to organisation of the Ad Hoc Safety Inspection prior to the first meeting of the Group in November 2004.

**9. ROSPA GOLD OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY AWARD FOR LEISURE CENTRES**

- 9.1 By way of a report by the Leisure Centres Health and Safety Co-ordinator the Group were pleased to note that the Huntingdon and St Ivo Leisure Centre had achieved the RoSPA Gold Occupational Health and Safety Award.
- 9.2 St Neots Leisure Centre had received a RoSPA Gold Occupational Health and Safety Award for the second year consecutively and Ramsey Leisure Centre for the third year consecutively.
- 9.3 Sawtry Leisure Centre had been awarded the RoSPA Gold Medal for Occupational Health and Safety in recognition for achieving the award for five years consecutively.

**10. ACCIDENT/INCIDENT REPORT**

**District Council Employees**

- 10.1 The Group received and noted a report by the Head of Personnel Services detailing 17 accidents which had taken place since the last meeting of the Group.
- 10.2 Further to incident numbers 1758 and 1761, the Group were advised that these accidents had not taken place during the routine handling of wheeled bins and were therefore isolated incidents.
- 10.3 In relation to incident number 1767, the Group were advised that it was difficult to monitor the use of the play equipment by school children.

**Leisure Centre Employees**

- 10.4 The Group received a report by the Head of Community Services detailing accidents which had been reported at the leisure centres since the last meeting of the Group.
- 10.5 Further to incident number 5895, the Group were advised that the accident had been reported under the RIDDOR process and the correct supervision procedure had been reintroduced to staff at the Centre.

## **11. TRAINING**

- 11.1 The Group were acquainted with a report by the Head of Personnel Services outlining training courses which had been held since the last meeting.
- 11.2 Further to the delay in implementing a tailored health and safety induction for the print room staff, the Group were pleased to note that the training was being organised.
- 11.3 In addition to the Health and Safety Review previously discussed at the meeting, the Group were advised that Driver Development Training and the use of mobile phones would be included in the final version of the health and safety policy.

Councillor J W Davies