

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

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Advisory Group met on the 16th November 2005 and Councillors J W Davies and L M Simpson were present.
- 1.2 Also in attendance were P Corley, Mrs T Davidson, P Duerden, J Craig, Mrs H Lack and Mrs C Rowland.
- 1.3 The Staff side representatives in attendance were C Sneesby, Mrs G Smith and S Richardson.
- 1.4 Apologies for absence from the meeting were submitted on behalf of Councillors Mrs D E Collins and K Reynolds and Mr K Lawson.
- 1.5 The report of the meeting of the Advisory Group held on 28th September 2005 as received and noted.

2. MEMBERS' INTERESTS

- 2.1 No declarations of interest were received.

3. VEHICLE INSURANCE PREMIUM COSTS

- 3.1 The Group were advised that the cost of the annual vehicle insurance premium for the Operations Division had been reduced from £149,000 during the previous year to £90,000 in the current year, a saving of over £50,000.
- 3.2 Members noted that the reduction might be attributable to "softer market conditions" and effective tendering, although it was the view of the Head of Operations that the reduction reflected the improved driving standards of the Council fleet and the extensive driver training programmes that the Council had run for a number of years.

4. DEFIBRILLATOR UPDATE

- 4.1 The Group were informed that as a result of an application by the Health and Safety Adviser to the British Heart Foundation for financial assistance, seven out of a possible nine defibrillators had been successfully purchased for use at the joint provision Leisure Centres and Hinchingsbrooke Country Park.
- 4.2 Having been advised that a number of first aiders had expressed slight apprehension with regard to the use of defibrillators, the Health and Safety Adviser outlined arrangements for demonstrations of the equipment designed to address the concerns together with an

extensive training programme which would take place early in the New Year.

- 4.3 In noting the considerable support provided by the Hinchingsbrooke Hospital and the financial contribution by the St Ives branch of the British Heart Foundation in partnership with the District Council towards the successful application, the Group agreed that a publicity event involving all partners should be arranged to mark the successful bid.

5. LEGIONELLA POLICY

- 5.1 Having been advised of a high profile court case which had resulted in a manager being prosecuted following an outbreak of Legionellosis in which seven people died, the Group considered and approved arrangements made to control Legionella bacteria in water systems which were outlined in a policy document on the control of Legionella. The new document would be appended to the Council's health and safety policy.
- 5.2 Members noted that the Nominated Person for Legionella control in Council premises would be the Facilities and Access Manager, who would be responsible for the coordination of a response to any potential Legionella outbreaks.
- 5.3 Having been advised that "suitable and sufficient" risk assessments designed to identify potential sources of Legionella bacteria would be undertaken as part of implementation of the policy, Members discussed the hot water distribution around Pathfinder House and noted that a number of precautions had already been taken to both avoid scalding incidents and potential outbreaks of Legionella.

6. ACCIDENT/INCIDENT REPORTS

DISTRICT COUNCIL EMPLOYEES

- 6.1 The Group received and noted a report by the Head of Personnel Services giving details of 21 accidents and 1 near miss incident involving employees, which had taken place since the last meeting.
- 6.2 With regard to incident no.1891, concern was raised that appropriate notification detailing the presence of asbestos had not been received from the Huntingdonshire Housing Partnership prior to work being undertaken on the premises by District Council Pest Control staff. Although the Pest Control Officer had on his own initiative made a hole in suspected asbestos soffit board, the Health and Safety Adviser reported that the incident had highlighted an area of risk which had not previously been identified.
- 6.3 Members were advised that procedures between Huntingdon Housing Partnership and the District Council now had been strengthened with regard to the notification of asbestos in their housing stock. Furthermore Pest Control Officers and Environmental Health Officers had attended asbestos awareness training and had been issued with appropriate personal protective clothing.

- 6.4 In relation to incident no.1911, Members raised concern that an employee had injured himself whilst trying to move a heavy glass recycling bin. The Group were advised that the employee had been reminded to radio for assistance when confronted with heavy bins, a practice which was included in the safe working practice for the activity. Having been advised that this activity had been identified as high risk in terms of manual handling, the Group discussed the progress of a project being undertaken by the Operations Division to review the service and improve the facilities and accessibility to mini recycling sites across the District.
- 6.5 In the ensuing discussion, Members noted that a number of the mini-recycling sites were privately owned and that the District Council was negotiating with the land owners to improve the access to these site. In total, 7 sites had been identified as requiring repair of which 6 had been completed. In addition, 2 sites had been identified as being suitable for the installation of underground collections facilitated by an external contractor.
- 6.6 Whilst Members were pleased to note that work was being undertaken to improve mini recycling sites, concern was expressed that the task of moving very heavy bins might require the presence of more than 1 employee. In that context, Members were informed that the safe working practices recently had been revised and now required employees to call for assistance to move heavy/awkward loads.
- 6.7 In noting that employees of the Operations Division often undertook tasks alone and in secluded locations in the District, the Group requested the Head of Operations to investigate the purchase of panic alarms to enable lone workers to alert passers-by and thereby obtain assistance.

LEISURE CENTRE EMPLOYEES

- 6.8 The Group also received a report by the Leisure Centres' Health and Safety Co-ordinator containing details of accidents, which had been reported at the Leisure Centres since the last meeting of the Group.

7. ANNUAL ACCIDENT REPORT

DISTRICT COUNCIL EMPLOYEES

- 7.1 The Group received and noted a report by the Head of Personnel Services summarising and comparing accident data and statistics previously reported to the Group during 2004/05.
- 7.2 Although the number of accidents reported had slightly increased, the Group were pleased to note that the accidents requiring notification to the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) under the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences (RIDDOR) had decreased from 14 in 2003/4 to 4 in 2004/5.

- 7.3 As the Operations Division undertake a greater number of high risk activities than other Council employees, the Health and Safety Adviser reported that further health and safety induction and refresher training with emphasis placed on behavioural safety would be provided by her in the new year.

LEISURE CENTRE EMPLOYEES

- 7.4 A report by the Head of Community Services analysing accidents which had involved leisure centre employees as previously reported to the Group during 2004/5 also was presented.
- 7.5 Having been advised that there had not been a need for any non-employee related accidents to be reported to the HSE under RIDDOR, the Group were advised that the Leisure Centres' Health and Safety Co-ordinator had hoped to bench mark the Council's Leisure Centres against other local authorities to identify trends and further areas for improvement.

8. INSURANCE CLAIMS

- 8.1 The Group were acquainted with details of three incidents involving current and former employees and a member of the public and the potential for insurance claims against the Council.
- 8.2 In relation to the incident involving a former Clerk of Works the Group noted that negotiations were continuing with a view to resolution of the case for employer liability.
- 8.3 In relation to the incident involving a six year old child injuring herself on a metal railing in St Ives and although no formal claim had been submitted, the Group were advised that an additional metal railing had been ordered to prevent any further accidents.

9. AD HOC HEALTH AND SAFETY INSPECTION

- 9.1 The Group agreed the following dates and times for future ad hoc Safety Inspections:-
- ◆ 9.15am on 14th December 2005; and
 - ◆ 9.30am on 20th February 2006.
- 9.2 Locations would be decided closer to the inspections.

10. HEALTH AND SAFETY WEEK

- 10.1 Members were acquainted with a report by the Head of Personnel Services detailing activities that had taken place at the Council during the annual Health and Safety Week. Members noted that the event had focused on the health side of "Health and Safety" to help promote the role of the Health and Safety Adviser, which was commonly assumed to be based solely upon the safety of the workforce.
- 10.2 Promotional events during the week changed on a daily basis to provide information to employees on a variety of health conditions

and included, effects of smoking, high blood pressure, various cancers, diabetes, Alzheimer's and dementia. In addition, Members were advised that the Council Chamber had been converted into a fitness suite for employees to use and take part in fitness classes under the guidance of leisure centre employees.

- 10.3 Having noted the success of the event and the associated presentation and quiz, Members placed on record their gratitude for the hard work and contributions made by the Health and Safety Adviser, the Occupational Health Nurse, Mrs S Finch and the staff and Manager from Ramsey and Sawtry Leisure Centres to the week.

11. TRAINING

- 11.1 The Group were acquainted by means of a report by the Head of Personnel Services with training courses which had been held since the last meeting.

J W Davies
Chairman of the Advisory Group