

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

**1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 The Advisory Group met on 14<sup>th</sup> November 2007 when Councillors J W Davies, A Hansard, Mrs P A Jordan and L M Simpson were present.
- 1.2 Also in attendance were Messrs P Corley, J Craig, P Duerden, S Howell, O Langford and R Preston, Miss H Ali, Ms D Ingram-Hall, Mrs C Rowland and Mrs T Davidson.
- 1.3 The Staff Side were represented by Mr K Lawson and Mrs S McKerral.
- 1.4 Apologies for absence from the meeting were submitted on behalf of Mrs G Smith.
- 1.5 In the absence of the Chairman, Mr Lawson took the Chair for the duration of the meeting.
- 1.6 The report of the meeting of the Advisory Group held on 12<sup>th</sup> September 2007 was received and noted.
- 1.7 No declarations of interest were received.

**2. AD-HOC SAFETY INSPECTION: 19<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER 2007**

- 2.1 The Advisory Group received an account of the observations recorded during an ad-hoc safety inspection which had taken place on 19<sup>th</sup> September 2007 at Centenary House, the Council's Temporary Customer Service Centre.
- 2.2 Although the Group had expressed some concerns, Members acknowledged that there were areas where good practice had been seen. The Team Leader for the Customer Services Team reported that the issues highlighted by the inspection had now been addressed. Members expressed their appreciation to all staff in Centenary House for their helpful assistance on the day.
- 2.3 Following proposals made by the Health & Safety Adviser, the Group agreed that a sufficient number of staff, across all Council sites, should undertake fire extinguisher training.

**3. PATHFINDER HOUSE: STAGE 1 DEMOLITION**

- 3.1 By way of a report by the Head of Technical Services, the Advisory Group were acquainted with details of the potential risks associated with the demolition of the vacant wing of Pathfinder House and the possible mitigation strategies that had been identified. Members were updated on a number of amendments that had been made to the annex of the report since it was originally circulated to the Group.

- 3.2 The Head of Technical Services advised the Group of the safety measures that would be put in place during the demolition, which included the provision of safety netting six metres in length from the wing being demolished to the occupied part of the building, together with wire mesh grills that would be hung around the scaffold. In response to questions raised by the Vice-Chairman concerning the noise monitoring procedures that had been adopted, the Group were advised that McAlpine would be monitoring their own noise levels as part of their “considerate constructor” programme. Members noted that the Environmental and Community Health Services Division had conducted their own background work and that monitoring equipment had been installed in the Legal & Estates Section. The Group were assured that McAlpine were taking health and safety matters seriously and were operating under the Contractors Health and Safety Scheme (CHAS), a national vetting scheme for health & safety matters on construction sites. Furthermore, the Group were advised that only those carrying a Construction Skills Certification Scheme (CSCS) card and wearing the relevant personal protective equipment would be permitted on site.
- 3.3 Following questions regarding the involvement of the Health & Safety Adviser during the construction process, the Group were advised that McAlpine were responsible for all matters relating to health & safety on site and that any concerns should be raised with the Head of Technical Services and/or the Health & Safety Adviser. The Group did however express the need for communicative links to remain open between all parties concerned.

#### **4. FIRE EVACUATIONS**

- 4.1 The Group received and noted reports on the recent fire evacuations at Pathfinder House and Eastfield House.
- 4.2 In noting the problems identified during the three evacuations at Pathfinder House, Members expressed concern with regard to the location of the meeting point situated in the rear car park, which would potentially cause a problem if the fire services required access to the building. In that light, the Health & Safety Adviser reported that in such circumstances, the roll call process should already have been completed before the fire services arrived, therefore allowing for the safe movement of staff upon the fire services arrival. In response to questions raised by a Member concerning vehicular access through the rear car park barrier, the Health & Safety Adviser undertook to liaise with the Facilities Manager and the fire authority requesting them to assess their access requirements.
- 4.3 Having drawn attention to the problems identified during the evacuation process at Eastfield House, the Health & Safety Co-ordinator for the Operations Division reported that some confusion had been evident amongst visitors to the building and that action would now be taken to prevent this happening in the future.

#### **5. INTERNAL SMOKING CESSATION CLINICS**

- 5.1 The Group were acquainted with details of a proposal by the Smoke Free Implementation Officer to introduce a 6 to 8 week pilot of free smoking cessation clinics to assist staff who wish to stop smoking. By way of background, the Group were advised that the clinics would mirror those already being offered to local businesses and that both one-to-one and group sessions would be offered.

- 5.2 The Group were informed that internal research and marketing would be conducted as a means of gauging staff interest on the matter. Discussions ensued on the need to ensure that the clinics would be offered corporately to all staff as well as the District Councillors. Members agreed that attendance at such clinics would be required in the individual's own time.
- 5.3 Having expressed support for the proposal, the Group concluded that the Smoke Free Implementation Officer should liaise with the Head of HR and Payroll Services on the matter.

## **6. ANNUAL ACCIDENT REPORTS**

### **(a) DISTRICT COUNCIL EMPLOYEES**

- 6.1 The Group received and noted a report by the Head of HR and Payroll Services summarising and comparing accident data and statistics for 2006/07 compared to previous years. In so doing, the Group noted that the total number of accidents across the Council had fallen by 10, although 18 incidents leading to absence from work for more than three days had risen by 3 when compared to the previous year. The Group's attention was also drawn to trends demonstrated in accidents over the year.
- 6.2 Members acknowledged that the number of incidents reported in the Operations Division was higher than those reported elsewhere within the Council due to the nature of the work involved. In the ensuing discussion the Health & Safety Adviser reported that in addition to a request for waterproof trousers and a shorter waterproof coat similar to that currently worn by the agency workers, a Medium Term Plan bid for a managed clothing facility would be submitted over the forthcoming year to help improve the welfare of staff in the Operations Division.

### **(b) LEISURE CENTRE EMPLOYEES**

- 6.3 A report by the Leisure Centres' Health & Safety Co-ordinator detailing the results of the annual accident summary at Leisure Centres was also presented. In so doing, the Group were pleased to note a slight decrease in the total number of accidents involving employees and that all accidents were of a minor nature. In noting the increase in numbers involving non-employees, the Group were advised that 12 of the accidents had related to flooring issues at two of the sites which had now been resolved with the contractors.

## **7. ACCIDENT REPORTS**

### **(a) DISTRICT COUNCIL EMPLOYEES**

- 7.1 The Group received and noted a report by the Head of HR and Payroll Services giving details of 11 accidents involving employees and 7 accidents involving non-employees which had taken place since the previous meeting. The Health and Safety Adviser drew Members' attention to one incident involving asbestos in the roof of one of the Council's buildings. Members were advised that contractors had resolved the situation safely.

**(b) LEISURE CENTRE EMPLOYEES**

- 7.2 The Group also received a report by the Leisure Centres' Health and Safety Co-ordinator detailing accidents which had been reported at the Leisure Centres since the previous meeting.

**8. HEALTH & SAFETY TRAINING UPDATE**

- 8.1 The Group were acquainted with a report by the Head of HR and Payroll Services outlining health & safety training courses which had been held since the previous meeting.
- 8.2 Following a proposal made by the Health and Safety Adviser, the Advisory Group agreed that a Corporate Manslaughter Seminar should be held prior to the next meeting of the Group.

**9. SAFETY INSPECTION AND NEXT MEETING**

- 9.1 The Advisory Group noted arrangements made for the Annual Safety Inspection and for their scheduled meeting on 5<sup>th</sup> March 2008.

Vice-Chairman  
Mr K Lawson