

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

**1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 The Advisory Group met on 5<sup>th</sup> March 2008 when Councillors Mrs P A Jordan and L M Simpson were present.
- 1.2 Also in attendance were Messrs S Bell, J Craig, P J Duerden, S Howell, O Langford and Mrs T Davidson, Ms C Deller, Mrs A Jerrom and Mrs C Rowland.
- 1.3 The Staff Side were represented by Mrs S McKerral, C Sneesby and Mrs G Smith.
- 1.4 In the absence of the Chairman and Vice Chairman, Councillor L M Simpson was elected Chairman of the Group for the duration of the meeting.
- 1.5 Apologies for absence from the meeting were submitted on behalf of Councillors J W Davies, A Hansard and K Reynolds and Messrs P Corley and K Lawson.
- 1.6 The report of the meeting of the Advisory Group held on 14<sup>th</sup> November 2007 was received and noted.

**2. AD HOC SAFETY INSPECTION: 14<sup>th</sup> FEBRUARY 2008**

- 2.1 The Advisory Group received and noted a report by the Head of Administration outlining the observations and comments recorded during an ad-hoc safety inspection which had taken place on 14<sup>th</sup> February 2008 at:
  - (a) A private home (Benefits home worker), St Neots
  - (b) St Neots Skateboard Park, Riverside Walk, St Neots
  - (c) Street Warden's Office, Tebbutts Road car park, St Neots.
- 2.2 As the home working pilot scheme was working well, the Advisory Group noted the potential for an increase in staff working from home and acknowledged the use of SOLO the home worker call-in facility could be encouraged in appropriate circumstances and that issues associated with communication, social interaction and isolation also required to be addressed to offset employees' feelings of isolation which may lead to stress.
- 2.3 Members were advised that the St Neots Skateboard Park was well managed and regularly maintained. A minor incident of vandalism to an inspection hatch was being followed up and the provision of an additional open sided shelter was being considered to hopefully resolve the problem and provide shelter for youths during inclement weather.

- 2.4 The visit to the Street Warden's office in Tebbutts Road car park was also encouraging, with refresher training in dealing with violence and aggression for the employee being the only action required.

### **3 ANNUAL SAFETY INSPECTION – 28<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER 2007**

- 3.1 The Group received and noted a report by the Head of Administration on the Annual Safety Inspection which took place at the District Council's new Operations Centre – Eastfield House, on 28<sup>th</sup> November 2007.

- 3.2 Members were pleased to note that the inspection had revealed few areas of concern and that, where action had been recommended, steps had been taken to ensure improvements were in hand. Councillor Mrs Jordan advised the Group that the feedback from staff working at the Centre on issues such as the workstations and chairs was very positive.

### **4. USE OF PAXTON PITS NATURE RESERVE BY SCHOOLS**

- 4.1 The Group received and noted a report by the Service Development Manager on the use by schools of the Paxton Pits Nature Reserve. Members' attention had previously been drawn to a fall in the number of schools engaged in pond dipping because of the health and safety concerns. (Report of the meeting held on 12<sup>th</sup> September 2007 refers).

- 4.2 However although there had been initial concern that the number of school visits were reducing, it had been found that this was not the case and that school visits still remained at a satisfactory level at 1000 children per year although the situation would continue to be monitored.

### **5. FIRE DRILLS**

- 5.1 Members received a report by the Team Leader, Customer Service Centre on a fire drill held at Centenary House on 16<sup>th</sup> November 2007.

- 5.2 Members were pleased to note that the roll call procedure was completed within three minutes and that the four minor problems identified had been actioned.

- 5.3 Concern was expressed by the Group with regard to the location of the assembly point during a roll call and it was suggested that an alternative be found that did not involve crossing St Mary's Road. The Health and Safety Adviser was asked to reconsider this arrangement and to report back to a future meeting.

### **6. INTERNAL SMOKING CESSATION CLINICS**

- 6.1 Members received and noted a report by the Smoke Free Implementation Officer who advised the group of the disappointing response by District Council staff to the internal smoking cessation clinics held in January.

- 6.2 It was explained that further encouragement to "quit for a week" on the lead up to "No Smoking Day" on 12<sup>th</sup> March had been advertised and

that stop smoking clinics would be run throughout the day from 5<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> March. These clinics would also be open to local businesses. Members noted that a further internal clinic may be attempted during April 2008 depending on the success of the “quit for a week” challenge.

## **7. ACCIDENT/INCIDENT REPORTS**

### **7.1(a) DISTRICT COUNCIL EMPLOYEES - ACCIDENTS/INCIDENTS**

A report by the Head of HR and Payroll Services outlining the accidents/incidents was submitted giving details of 27 accidents involving District Council employees one suffered by an agency worker and 3 by non employees during the previous quarter. All were of a minor nature. Members were advised that home workers had been reminded that they still were required to complete reports in the event of an accident in their own homes. Ongoing trials of marigold glove types continued to take place to seek to overcome the potential for injuries when gloves split when handling fly tipped material.

### **7.2(b) LEISURE CENTRE EMPLOYEES - ACCIDENTS/INCIDENTS**

Members received and noted a report by the Head of Administration outlining accidents/incidents reported at the Leisure Centres during the previous quarter. Of the 228 accidents reported, only 7 resulted from participation in an activity and any necessary remedial action to address the cause had been taken.

## **8. TRAINING REPORT**

- 8.1 A report by the Head of HR and Payroll providing an update on health and safety training was received and noted.
- 8.2 In particular, it was noted that extensive training had taken place in the Operations Division.
- 8.3 Councillor Simpson gave an account of his recent driving course and suggested that it might be prudent if this was made mandatory for pool car users, for officers with leased cars and for those staff who claim business mileage. This view was supported by the Advisory Group.

## **9. PROPOSED FUTURE SAFETY INSPECTION DATES**

- 9.1 The Group agreed the following schedule of safety inspections:
- 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2008 – ad hoc inspection
  - 28<sup>th</sup> October 2008 – ad hoc inspection
  - 25<sup>th</sup> November 2008 – annual inspection
  - 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2009 – ad hoc inspection.
- 9.2 The possibility of inspecting the new HQ on the Pathfinder House site was suggested for the January 2009 inspection, provided building works had been completed. Members were invited to make any further suggestions for visits to the Health and Safety Adviser.

**10. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

- 10.1 It was noted that the next meeting of the Advisory Group was scheduled to be held on 11<sup>th</sup> June 2008.

Chairman for the meeting  
Councillor L M Simpson