

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

**1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 The Advisory Group met on 10 June 2009 when Councillors Mrs B E Boddington, J W Davies, A Hansard and Mrs P A Jordan were present.
- 1.2 The Staff Side were represented by Mrs S McKerral, Mrs G Smith and C Sneesby.
- 1.3 Also in attendance were Messrs P Corley, J Craig, S Howell, Ed Milne, C and Ward, Mrs S Caddell, Mrs T Davidson, Mrs C Garbett, Mrs A Jerrom and Mrs C Rowland.
- 1.4 Apologies for absence from the meeting were submitted on behalf of Councillor P Dakers and K Lawson.

**2. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN**

- 2.1 Councillor Mrs B E Boddington was elected Chairman of the Group.

**3. REPORT OF THE ADVISORY GROUP**

- 3.1 The report of the meeting of the Advisory Group held on the 5<sup>th</sup> March 2008 was received and noted.

**4. MEMBERS' INTERESTS**

- 4.1 No declarations of interest were received.

**5. APPOINTMENT OF VICE CHAIRMAN**

- 5.1 Keith Lawson was appointed Vice Chairman of the Group in his absence.

**6. AD-HOC SAFETY INSPECTION: 8<sup>TH</sup> APRIL 2009**

- 6.1 The Advisory Group received and noted the comments and observations made during the Ad-Hoc Safety inspection carried out on 8<sup>th</sup> April.
- 6.2 Further to the ongoing investigations into the concern with the 1100 litre wheeled bins, visits had been made to mini recycling sites at Sainsbury's in Huntingdon, St Judith's Lane, Sawtry and The Highway, Great Staughton. Members of the Group had been able to observe the sites first hand and speak to an operative who had been present and was responsible for clearing the

area of glass and debris. It was suggested by the Group that if a second operative was deemed necessary to empty the bins it would be cost effective for the cleaning work also to be carried out at the same time. The importance of continuous tool box talks and the possibility of laminated safety sheets for the vehicle cabs was also to be suggested to R Ward.

- 6.3 The visits had highlighted the problems encountered by operatives and it was decided that it would be helpful if those responsible for carrying out the work were consulted. It was therefore agreed that Mrs C Rowland and K Lawson would interview them.
- 6.4 The Group had also visited a steep slope in Coneygear Road, Huntingdon which, as a result of recent structural work, had been left grassed but unplanted. It was suggested that the easiest way to avoid any danger associated with having to cut the grass on the slope was to plant low growing shrubs which would result in shading out grass and therefore leave the area mainly self maintained. Chris Allen had confirmed to Mrs Rowland following the visit that the contractor had no responsibility for maintenance of the slope.
- 6.5 As R Ward was present at the meeting he confirmed that the decision had since been made to plant the area with low growing shrubs in uniformity with the rest of the road.

## **7. HSE INSPECTOR'S REPORT – 1100 LITRE WHEELED BINS**

- 7.1 The Group received a report by Ed Milnes – HM Ergonomics Specialist Inspector in Health and Safety, into Eurobin handling arrangements carried out by Huntingdonshire District Council.
- 7.2 The report had been commissioned following concerns raised by the Group over the manual handling of 1100 and 1280 litre Eurobins containing glass for recycling.
- 7.3 5 typical sites had been visited by Mr Milnes who had been accompanied by Steven Howell, Operations' Health and Safety Co-ordinator. Mr Milnes explained that the forces needed to push-pull the Eurobins varied significantly depending on factors such as wheel alignment, severity of thresholds, quality of ground surface, slopes and level of fill. During his visits he had recorded forces that exceeded the HSE risk filter figures which indicated an increased risk of manual handling injury.
- 7.4 Mr Milnes stated that in his opinion the task required two employees to carry out the task to reduce the foreseeable risk of injury to the lowest level reasonably practicable. Furthermore, the forces recorded could be sufficiently high that even when two employees were handling the bins together they may sometimes be exposed to an increased risk of injury. However he acknowledged that effective training and awareness of the issues involved should help reduce those risks adequately.
- 7.5 The Group noted R Ward's report in response to the HSE Inspector's report in which he agreed that it had raised valid points. In agreeing that it was a high

risk activity in common with other aspects of work carried out by the Operations Division, he felt that the risks had been minimised by the current working practice whereby the employee was instructed to call for assistance where necessary.

- 7.6 In response to a question regarding the unknown weight of bins, he explained that in order for recycling credits to be given the bin had to be opened and the contents viewed by the employee before they emptied it. It was his opinion that injuries would not be sustained if existing safe working procedures were correctly followed. Disciplinary procedures could be put in place for employees who failed to follow these procedures but he was reluctant to go down this route.
- 7.7 Mr Ward was concerned that the introduction of a 2 man operation would mean a significant increase in costs and could lead to the operation becoming unsustainable. Finance was a major concern and with kerbside glass collection remaining a future possibility, there was a probability that the need for bring sites in their present form could cease in the near future.
- 7.8 In answer to questions raised, the Group was advised that employees carried radios and mobile phones so that they could summon assistance and they could proceed to other jobs if a long wait was anticipated. In addition it was explained that over the last 12 months a second vehicle had routinely been used to follow the main vehicle at sites known to have heavy bins. Concerns were raised by Members over lone working in the case of accidents and the importance of continuous training to raise awareness.
- 7.9 The Health and Safety Adviser reported on the outcome of discussions with the employees concerned and a copy of their schedule was circulated along with comments from K Lawson, Safety Representative. Suggestions for improvements to some sites had been made by the employees along with comments that they would not have time to finish their tasks if they had to call for help each time. Following a lengthy discussion on the best way to solve the problem and the Head of Operations having accepted the need for the arrangement, it was

#### RECOMMENDED

that the Group support the proposal made by the Health and Safety Adviser that a more robust system involving 2 employees be instigated for the safe emptying of Eurobins at recycling bring sites and that the financial implications of such an arrangement be considered by Cabinet.

*A copy of the associated reports are attached*

## **8. ACCIDENT/INCIDENT REPORTS**

### **(a) District Council Employees**

- 8.1 The Group noted a report by The Head of People Performance and Partnerships detailing 33 accidents that had occurred since the last meeting of the Group. Of these, 2 accidents had resulted in employees being off work for more than three days and had therefore been reported to the HSE under the RIDDOR Regulations. Members were advised that the temperature of the water used in the hose mentioned in incident 2206 had now been regulated to a maximum 95° and the operative injured in accident No. 2194 would not be called on in future to assist with the emptying of 1100 litre wheeled bins.

**(b) Leisure Centre Employees**

- 8.2 The Group also received a report by the Leisure Centres' Health and Safety Co-ordinator detailing the 7 employee and 358 non-employee related accidents which had been reported since the last meeting and were pleased to be advised that any remedial action needed had been taken.
- 8.3 It was noted that in future an accident report would be produced by the Operations division and the reporting forms would be changed slightly to show RIDDOR accidents at the head.

**9. TRAINING**

- 9.1 The Advisory Group noted that Health and Safety training would take place in July for the Development Management Panel.
- 9.2 Further to item No. 6.2 ante, the Group was pleased to note that Steven Howell would be introducing a 17 week rolling programme of 'Tool Box Talks' at the end of June to refuse and recycling operatives. This would be delivered annually thereafter.

**10. FIRE DRILLS**

**(a) Pathfinder House**

The Advisory Group were pleased to note that the first fire evacuation exercise that had been carried out in the new headquarters building had been very successful. Employees had been commended for the smooth operation and all points raised were being addressed.

**(b) Speke House**

Having noted that there was a need for employers (HDC & CCC) at Speke House to co-ordinate their emergency procedures, the results of this fire drill had been good.

**(c) Eastfield House**

The Advisory Group were pleased to be informed that full evacuation of Eastfield House had been achieved in 2 minutes 34 seconds when the drill was carried out in May.

**11. FUTURE MEETING DATES**

- 11.1 The next meeting of the Safety Advisory Group would take place on 9th September 2009. A full day ad-hoc inspection was planned for 25th June 2009 and a further inspection on 17th September 2009.

Chairman