

## SAFETY ADVISORY GROUP

WEDNESDAY, 7 MARCH 2012

GROUND FLOOR MEETING ROOM 1A/B

### ACTION SHEET

**MEMBERS  
PRESENT:**

**Management Side:**

Councillor A Hansard - Chairman  
Councillor J W Davies  
Councillor Mrs P A Jordan  
Councillor T V Rogers

**Employee Side:**

Mrs S Mckerral  
Mrs G Smith  
G Vince

**IN ATTENDANCE:**

T Bowmer  
Mrs A Jerrom  
S Howell

**APOLOGIES:**

Councillor Mrs B E Boddington  
P Corley  
K Lawson  
C Sneesby

| ITEM NO. | SUBJECT   | ACTION BY |
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| 1        | <p><b>Report of Previous Meeting</b></p> <p>The report of the meeting of the Advisory Group held on 7th December 2011 was received and noted.</p>   |           |
| 2        | <p><b>Members' Interests</b></p> <p>No declarations were received.</p>  |           |
| 3        | <p><b>Feedback on the Potential Risks Associated with the Atrium Floor</b></p> <p>With the aid of a report by the Corporate Safety Advisor, Mr T Bowmer, the Group was updated on the situation regarding the ongoing work to address the slippery atrium floor in the customer services reception area</p> |           |

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|          | <p>of Pathfinder House. At its meeting in December 2011 the Group had received a report from the Unison appointed Health and Safety representative, Mr K Lawson outlining his professional concerns over safety issues with the surface. A report detailing the actions deemed necessary had been formally submitted to the Chief Officer's Management Team (COMT) in January 2012 at the request of SAG, and interim measures had been agreed.</p> <p>Tenders had gone out for super absorbent matting to replace the permanent entrance matting, and in the interim additional temporary matting had been rolled out in the three entrance areas which appeared to be working well.</p> <p>Having attended a meeting with all interested parties earlier in the day Mr Bowmer advised of the current situation. Mr Bowmer drew the Group's attention to Appendix 1 of his report which detailed the remedial actions that were required by COMT in order to adequately control the risk. Mr Bowmer explained that although a permanent solution involving replacement of the current surface had been identified, Facilities Management had decided to take an incremental approach and were trying the aforementioned measures involving matting, in the hope that these might obviate the need for fully carpeting the area. A trip hazard had been introduced with the use of matting and COMT had requested that to minimise this risk the matting should be rolled up and removed during dry weather. This had been agreed by Facilities Management and Mr Bowmer had offered manual handling training in this respect if required. Having questioned whether cleaning staff had been trained in suitable cleaning techniques for the floor, the Group was advised that training had taken place but that no formal record had been kept. Members therefore requested that a report detailing the training be submitted to a future meeting.</p> <p>The Group was advised that further measures including risk assessments had been recommended by COMT and that these were in the process of being carried out by Customer Service Centre staff in association with Environmental Management.</p> <p>In discussing the amount of outdated slips and trip information contained within the Council's intranet system, the Group agreed to a suggestion by Mr Bowmer that he should be given access to the Health and Safety Pages on the Intranet in order that he can maintain and edit the information, a task previously undertaken by HR. Mr Bowmer advised that staff could then be signposted to these pages.</p> <p>Having concurred with Mr Bowmer's view that the investigations into the slip risk had identified a number of areas where corporate improvements in safety management could be made and having had their attention drawn to Appendix 2 of the report which highlighted a general failure of management controls, the Group</p> <p>RESOLVED</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>that the Safety Advisor create an 'arrangements section' to the Health and Safety Policy for the</li> </ul> | <p>Facilities Management</p> <p>Head of IMD</p> <p>Safety Advisor</p> |

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|          | <p>Group's consideration. The arrangements section would include among other topics, HDC's policy on, controlling slip and trip hazards and risk assessment. In addition the Safety Advisor is directed to put forward health and safety record templates for SAG's consideration, to include risk assessment templates;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• that the Safety Advisor be given appropriate permissions and access to the Health and Safety pages on the Council's intranet in order that he may update, edit and maintain appropriate information; and</li> <li>• that a corporate reporting system/existing reporting systems should be created/utilised to encourage employees to report unsafe acts and safety improvements.</li> </ul>   | <p>COMT/Head of IMD</p> <p>COMT/Safety Advisor</p> |
| 4        | <p><b>Violent Incident Register</b></p> <p>By way of a report by the Head of Customer Services, the Group noted the progress that has been achieved by the Violent Incident Panel over the previous 12 months.</p> <p>The Advisory Group was reminded that the Violent Incident Register had been introduced in 2007 in order to alert employees and elected members to significant risks to their personal safety by providing up to date, timely information about known incidents of violence and aggression. The Register was managed by a Panel of officers comprising the Head of Customer Services (Chairman), Street Scene Manager, Corporate Systems and Information Manager, Solicitor, the General Manager, Leisure and the Corporate Health and Safety Advisor, following a stringent management regime.</p> <p>The Advisory Group was advised that there had been 13 incidents of violence directed towards Council employees in the 12 months to December 2011. Of these 7 have been added to the Register, which was available to all staff via the GIS system on the Council's intranet site, allowing an informed decision to be made and appropriate action to be taken by employees or elected Members prior to a visit to a known aggressor.</p> <p>In answer to a question the Group was informed that action taken toward aggressors was dependent on the severity of the incident, with reports made to the Police where appropriate.</p> |  |
| 5        | <p><b>First Contact Service Update</b></p> <p>With the aid of a report by the Head of Customer Services, the Group</p>   |  |

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|          | <p>was updated on the work of the First Contact Service.</p> <p>Mrs Barber reminded the Group that the First Contact Service had been introduced in 2001 as part of the Council's overall stress management arrangements when it had been agreed that there should be an additional alternative means of support to employees which would provide a confidential listening service. Mrs Barber explained that there are currently 11 First Contacts all of whom are Council officers that have volunteered their time and undertaken appropriate training. The service is able to refer employees to the Council's external counselling service, currently Cambridgeshire Consultancy Service and Richmond Fellowship, where appropriate.</p> <p>The Advisory Group was advised that there had been 150 formal and 91 informal approaches from employees to the Service to date and 34 referrals to the professional counselling service. During the period January to December 2011 24 formal, 8 informal approaches and 5 referrals to counselling had been made. There had been no referrals to the Richmond Fellowship in that period. The service continues to be well used by employees and an increase in approaches made in the previous quarter has been attributable to staff concerns over budget cuts and job security. The value placed on the service by staff was highlighted in a recent peer review for the Equality Framework for Local Government.</p> <p>In answer to a question from the Health, Safety and Emergency Planning Officer, Operations, Mrs Barber advised that reports covering stress absences are regularly made to the Employment Panel.</p> <p>Having acknowledged the value of the service and the commitment of the First Contact officers, Councillor Hansard undertook to send a letter of thanks to the First Contact Service on behalf of the Advisory Group.</p> | AH/AJ     |
| 6        | <p><b>Accident Reporting Procedure</b></p> <p>The Advisory Group considered a report by the Corporate Safety Advisor seeking their comments on the proposed new accident reporting procedure prior to its adoption by Employment Panel.</p> <p>Mr Bowmer explained that the Council has a statutory obligation to record, investigate and where appropriate report certain types of accidents under the terms of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, and in particular the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 1995 (RIDDOR). Significant amendments to RIDDOR would come into force on 6th April 2012 in order to bring it in line with the self certification period of 7 days, and it was therefore considered timely to introduce a Corporate Accident Reporting Procedure which would reflect the new arrangements. The Group was advised that although the Council currently had a number of informal service based procedures for ensuring that accidents were reported there was no corporate accident reporting procedure clearly detailing the Council's duties and responsibilities.</p>   |           |

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|   | <p>The Group was advised that Chief Officers, Heads of Service and Leisure and Operations Safety Co-ordinators had been consulted on the new procedure, and a training programme had been planned in order to introduce the final procedure to Heads of Service and Activity Managers.</p> <p>Having been advised that the procedure, as a supplement to the Health and Safety Policy, fell within the remit of the Employment Panel, it was</p> <p>RESOLVED</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• that the contents of the procedure be endorsed for adoption by the Employment Panel; and</li> <li>• that the planned training course/workshops to introduce the new procedure to Heads of Service and Activity Managers, be supported by the Group.</li> </ul> | Safety Advisor |
| 7   | <b>Quarterly Accident/Incident Reports</b>   |                |
| <p>(a) Operations Division</p> <p>The Group was acquainted by way of a report by the Operations Division Health and Safety Co-ordinator with details of the 12 accidents that been reported by the divisions' employees since the last meeting. Two accidents had been reported under the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR). One non-employee related accident had been reported at Paxton Pits but the individual had declined to give any details. Having commented on the high number of twisted ankles that been reported by refuse recycling loaders, Members were assured that the situation was being monitored and addressed.</p>  |  |                |
| <p>(b) District Council Employees</p> <p>The Group received and noted a report by the Corporate Health and Safety Advisor giving details of the accidents and incidents that had occurred in the Council's office based premises and those reported by the Sports and Active Lifestyles Team during the previous quarter.</p> <p>Members were advised that an ambulance had been called for one employee although it had transpired that the injury had been caused during the employee's walk to work. One member of staff had tripped on the new 'Waterhog' matting in the Customer Services Section although no injury had been sustained. The number of children that had suffered minor injuries during lifestyle activities had risen to 3 since the report was compiled.</p> |  |                |

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|          | <p>(c) One Leisure</p> <p>The Group also received a report by the One Leisure Quality, Facilities and Safety Manager detailing accidents which had been reported since the last meeting. No accidents had been reported under the requirements of RIDDOR Regulations. Five employee related accidents and 122 non-employee accidents, 7 of which were not caused as a direct result of taking part in an activity, had been reported, and remedial action had been taken.</p>   |           |
| 8        | <p><b>Fire Evacuations</b></p> <p>The Corporate Health and Safety Advisor drew the Group's attention to two recent fire evacuations that had taken place at Pathfinder House on the 26th January and 23th February 2012. Having reported that no-one in the building had been prepared to take on responsibility for the preparation of a report on the events for the Safety Advisory Group, a job which previously would have been undertaken by the former Health and Safety Co-ordinator, Mr Bowmer tabled a report that he had prepared.</p> <p>The Group was advised that Mr Bowmer had been approached by Unison Appointed Safety Representative and Fire Officer Mrs S McKerral who had raised several concerns with him over the failings of the evacuations. Mrs McKerral had listed her concerns in a report which had been incorporated within the report submitted by Mr Bowmer. Their main concerns were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Council appeared to have no Responsible Person for Fire following the departure of the Director of Central Services</li> <li>• Several of the previously appointed Competent Persons for Fire had now left the Council's employ, and on the day of the second evacuation there had been no Competent Person on duty, therefore there had been no-one to report to following the evacuation. Mrs McKerral had reported to her Head of Service and that report had then been forwarded to Mr Bowmer</li> <li>• No fire policy or procedure existed</li> <li>• Wall name boards were difficult to remove from the wall and the design meant names could easily slip</li> <li>• Queuing had been a major problem on the fire escape stairway</li> <li>• Noise on the stairway had resulted in instructions not being heard</li> <li>• Confusion as to the whereabouts of Evac Chairs for the disabled</li> <li>• Assembly points are positioned at the minimum distance allowed (18m) which results in employees standing too close to the building</li> <li>• Fire Officer tabards were being worn by members of staff that had not been appointed as Fire Officers</li> <li>• Lancaster staff did not evacuate – although they are expected to come under the responsibility of the Council it is not known who is their Fire Officer</li> </ul> |           |

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|          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Only a small number of line managers are aware of personal evacuation emergency plans (PEEP)</li> </ul> <p>Two reports from the Facilities and Administration Manager covering both evacuations are contained within Mr Bowmer's report along with recommendations for measures that need to be put in place in order to reduce the Council's overall corporate risk rating which has significantly increased.</p> <p>Having been made aware of the seriousness of the current situation, the Group</p> <p>RESOLVED</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• that Cabinet should be advised of the failures of the current system;</li> <li>• that a Responsible Person for Fire should be appointed; and</li> <li>• that a comprehensive Fire Evacuation Plan and Policy be produced.</li> </ul> | COMT/Cabinet |
| 9        | <p><b>Date of Next Meeting</b></p> <p>The next meeting of the Group was scheduled for 27th June 2012.</p>  |              |