

SAFETY ADVISORY GROUP

WEDNESDAY, 27 FEBRUARY 2013

CIVIC SUITE 1A, PATHFINDER HOUSE, ST MARY'S STREET, HUNTINGDON PE29 3TN

ACTION SHEET

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Management Side:

Councillor Mrs B Boddington
Councillor A Hansard (Chairman)

Employee Side:

K Lawson
Mrs S McKerral
C Sneesby
G Vince

IN ATTENDANCE:

Ms J Barber
B Bentley
T Bowmer
Ms K Domingo
D Harwood
S Howell
Mrs A Jerrom

APOLOGIES:

Councillor J W Davies
Councillor Mrs P A Jordan
Mrs G Smith

ITEM NO.	SUBJECT	ACTION BY
1	<p>Report of the Advisory Group</p> <p>The report and action sheet of the meeting of the Advisory Group held on 29th November 2012 was received and noted.</p> <p>In answer to a question regarding the action associated with item 3 of the report, Mr Bowmer advised that he was not aware of any action that had been taken with regard to the requirement for detailed training analysis.</p> <p>With regard to item No 4 of the report, B Bentley undertook to investigate an apparent misdial when FIRE was typed into the phones.</p>	B Bentley

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2	<p>Humidity Issues</p> <p>With the aid of a joint report by the Environmental Health Commercial Team Leader, Student Environmental Health Officer and Facilities Team Leader, the Group considered the results of an investigation into humidity issues associated with Pathfinder House that had been brought to the attention of the Group at its meeting on 12 September 2012. Mr Lawson advised that the Chief Officers Management Team had been briefed on the contents of the report prior to its presentation to the Safety Advisory Group.</p> <p>As part of her work based learning, student EHO Miss K Domingo had been assessing the nature and extent of the problem since October 2012. A total of 77 measurements had been taken at 23 locations throughout Pathfinder House between November 2012 and January 2013. Following a request by the Group at their November meeting measurements had been extended to include Eastfield House.</p> <p>Mr Lawson explained that humidity levels reported in Pathfinder House routinely fell below the minimum level recommended in the guidance produced by the Chartered Institution of Building Services Engineers (CIBSE). Consequently this indicated that the Council was in breach of regulations 5 and 6 of the Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992, which in turn constitutes a breach of section 2 of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 by failing to provide a working environment that was, so far as was reasonably practicable, safe and without risks to health.</p> <p>The Group considered the range of remedial measures available and were advised that Mr Bentley had received an initial estimate of the likely cost of installing an engineering solution. Having been advised that humidification appeared to have been excluded from the original build specification the Group agreed that Mr Bentley should request advice from an independent expert and submit a possible choice of solutions to a future meeting of the Group.</p> <p>With regard to whether employees should be informed of the current situation Mr Lawson recommended transparency. The Group was advised that the report of the meeting would be available to staff on the Council's Health and Safety Intranet page.</p> <p>Thanks were expressed to Ms Domingo by the Group for her work in support of the investigation.</p>	B Bentley/ K Lawson
3	<p>Insurance Claims and Health & Safety Management</p> <p>With the aid of a report by the Internal Audit and Risk Manager the Advisory Group were provided with a summary of insurance claims linked to health and safety management practices.</p> <p>The report followed a meeting in November 2012 between the Chairman</p>	

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	<p>of the Safety Advisory Group, the Council's Health and Safety Advisor and the Internal Risk Manager to discuss the possible opportunity to obtain reductions in insurance premiums through reducing insurable losses arising from health and safety incidents.</p> <p>Having provided details of the applicable premiums paid for the main insurance risks relating to health and safety in 2012/13 Members were advised that insurance premiums across the four main areas, employers liability, public liability, personal accident and motor vehicles, had reduced by almost 50% since 2005 as a result of improving risk management practices and re-tendering. The Group was advised that the reduction in premiums also reflected the Council's exceptional history of health and safety management and relatively low level of claims. It was therefore suggested that current health and safety initiatives would need to be maintained, and the cost of any future initiatives would need to be considered against any potential benefits.</p> <p>In discussing the need to maintain the Council's excellent record the Chairman undertook to assist in any way he could with Mr Harwood's plans to re-invigorate the officer led Risk Management Group under the new management structure.</p> <p>Mr Bowmer suggested that employees' attention should be drawn to facilities such as the 'driver's handbook' which was available on the intranet, it was suggested that this could be mentioned during staff appraisals and team meetings.</p>	<p>Cllr Hansard</p> <p>HoS</p>
4	<p>Violent Incident Panel</p> <p>By way of a report by the Head of Customer Services, the Group noted the progress that had 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 and 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 10 incidents of violence directed towards Council employees in the 12 months to December 2012 all of which had been added to the Register. This 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>Concern was raised over access to the system by some staff in the</p>	

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	<p>Operations Division, who appeared to have limited use of the Intranet. Mrs Barber undertook to liaise with Mrs Hansen regarding communication of information to operations staff and to look at increasing awareness of the Register to all employees.</p>	J Barber/S Hansen
5	<p>First Contact Update</p> <p>With the aid of a report by the Head of Customer Services, the Group 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 were currently 11 First Contacts all of whom are Council officers that have volunteered their time and undertaken appropriate training. Employees could also be referred to the Council's external counselling services, Cambridgeshire Consultancy Service and Richmond Fellowship by HR where appropriate.</p> <p>The Advisory Group was advised that there had been 169 formal and 94 informal approaches from employees to the Service to date and 40 referrals to the professional counselling service. During the period January 2012 to January 2013 19 formal, 3 informal approaches and 6 referrals to counselling had been made. Mrs Barber attributed the rise in approaches associated with work during the previous quarter to staff concerns over the pay review and job security. In response to a comment regarding the lack of volunteers from One Leisure, Mrs Barber advised Members that despite not having a representative on the service, staff from One Leisure had made use of it.</p> <p>The Chairman expressed thanks on behalf of the Group to Mrs Barber and the First Contact Team for their continued work.</p>	
6	<p>Health and Safety Training Provision</p> <p>Following a request at the previous meeting, the Advisory Group noted a report by the Council's Corporate Safety Advisor updating them on health and safety training courses provided by Organisational and Workforce Development (OWD), a division of Local Government Shared Service (LGSS) who were now responsible for the Council's HR and learning and development provision.</p> <p>Mr Bowmer reported that the LGSS website provided a variety of information on the courses available, however the majority of these courses related to office based employees rather than technical or operational staff. Mr Bowmer stressed that it was important to make use of the 500 places that were available each year, the cost of which had</p>	HoS

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	<p>been included in the overall contract agreed by the Council and LGSS. Choice was not restricted to the courses listed and bespoke courses could be provided on request but all were offered on a first come first served basis.</p> <p>Mr Bowmer advised that as the Council's training provider, LGSS should always be given the option of providing additional courses that may be required. Mr Howell advised that some training provision was included within procurement costs of new vehicles. The Group was advised by an Operations Division employee that some staff felt that they were unlikely to be invited to attend training courses due to staff shortages and had had little access to training in the past. Mr Bowmer responded that this would need to be investigated, particularly in light of the fact that training reports brought to the Group previously had indicated that a full programme existed.</p> <p>With respect to e-learning provision, employees had access to two sources, Safety Media, a system purchased several years ago which was independent of LGSS and remained largely unused and Learning Pool which required Managers to create their own presentations and share relevant content, which would be dependent on time available. Once again the issue of accessibility of the Intranet and associated e-learning modules for employees working at Eastfield House was raised as a cause for concern.</p> <p>Mr Bowmer reported that between October 2011 and the end of October 2012 he had provided courses covering the Council's Health and Safety Policy, accident and hazard reporting procedures and an IOSH course on elected members' responsibilities. A variety of first aid courses had also been completed.</p>	<p>S Howell/E Kendall</p> <p>E Kendall</p>
7	Quarterly Accident /Incident Reports	
	<p>(a) Pathfinder House</p> <p>The Group received and noted a report by the Corporate Health and Safety Advisor giving details of the accidents or incidents reported in offices and during active lifestyles activities since the last meeting of the Group. The accidents/incidents that had been reported had been of a relatively minor nature, there had been no statutorily reportable RIDDOR accidents involving employees and a total of 4 non – RIDDOR accidents and incidents reported in Pathfinder House.</p> <p>The Sub-Group agreed with a suggestion by the Corporate Health and Safety Advisor that an additional category be included in future reports which would list 'first aid incidents.' This would provide a mechanism for first aiders to report everyday rough and tumble incidents that had</p>	

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	<p>required first aid.</p>	
	<p>(b) Operations Division</p> <p>Members noted a report by the Operations Division Health and Safety Co-ordinator giving details of the 15 employee and 1 non-employee related accidents that had been reported during Operations Division activities since the last meeting of the Group.</p> <p>Of the accidents a total of 7 had been the result of slips during icy weather conditions and Mr Howell was in the process of investigating the possibility of providing non-slip attachments for footwear, 2 accidents had been reported under the requirements of the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR). All accidents had been reviewed at Operations Management Team meetings and remedial action taken was detailed in the report.</p>	
	<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. 7 employee related accidents and 103 non-employee accidents, had been reported, 8 of which were not caused as a direct result of taking part in an activity, remedial action had been taken.</p>	
<p>8</p>	<p>Date of Next Meeting</p> <p>The next meeting of the Group was scheduled for 4th June 2013.</p>	