

STAFF COMMITTEE



18 JUNE 2012 - 10:00AM

PRESENT: Councillor K G Mayor, Chairman; Councillors J F Clark, P Murphy and F H Yeulett.

APOLOGIES: Councillors M I Archer, J R Chambers, K G Peachey and C J Seaton.

S1/12 MINUTES OF 30 APRIL 2012

The minutes of the meeting of 30 April 2012 were confirmed and signed.

*** FOR INFORMATION OF THE COUNCIL ***

S2/12 CORPORATE HEALTH AND SAFETY ANNUAL REPORT

Members considered the Health and Safety performance of the Council for April 2011 to March 2012. Members were informed that:

- there was a decrease in the number of accidents across the Council during the year; a total of 27 compared to 33 in 2010/11;
- seven of these accidents were reportable to the Health and Safety Executive under the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR) 1995;
- a total of 202 days were lost through work-related injuries, this compares to 294 during 2010/11;
- benchmarking was undertaken against South Cambridgeshire District Council who have similar staffing levels and services, which shows Fenland is below the levels of accidents recorded in this organisation. In previous years, benchmarking has been undertaken with Huntingdonshire District Council to assess performance, but it was not in a position to assist this year;
- there were 11 documented reports of abusive/threatening behaviour towards staff, which is a decrease compared to 2010/11;
- a total of 82 staff received various health and safety training courses during the year;
- 3 teams were audited during the year, all achieving a score above the minimum standards required;
- the requirement under RIDDOR to report over three day injury has changed as of April 2012 to seven days incapacitation, which aligns the incident reporting threshold with that for obtaining a 'fit note' from a GP for sickness absence;
- the HSE conducted a detailed inspection of the Council's Refuse Service, which reviewed the documented health and safety management systems, observing crews working in the district and questioning staff, with the feedback being very positive and only minor recommendations being made;

- all targets within the Health and Safety Action Plan 2011/12 are completed.

Members asked questions, made comments and received responses as follows:

- why is the Council now benchmarking with South Cambridgeshire District Council as it is felt that Fenland is more aligned to Huntingdonshire? Officers advised that the Corporate Health and Safety Officer left Huntingdonshire and they were unable to provide the statistics at this time, but the Council will approach them again next year. Is the benchmarking with South Cambridgeshire District Council just being undertaken for one year or will it be undertaken again next year? Officers advised that South Cambridgeshire is a similar organisation to benchmark against and the more organisations that the Council can benchmark against is of benefit;
- the point was made that the accident figures show that Environment and Leisure is where most of the injuries occur, but 240,000 bins are emptied on a monthly basis, and, therefore, it is felt that this Council has a good injury rate as employees are working on the main roads all the time. Officers agreed that this is a positive figure in light of the number of bins collected each year and stated that this is an area that is targeted with Health and Safety training;
- were the two instances where a person was hit by moving vehicles by a private or a refuse vehicle? Officers explained the circumstances of the instances and injuries advising that they were private vehicles, with a thorough investigation being undertaken by the Council and both employees are now back at work;
- the point was made that during the review of the refuse team one of the comments in the consultation was that the new working hours would increase accidents and is there any evidence of this? Officers advised there was not;
- the figures for violence to staff are they purely from members of the public? Officers advised in the affirmative;
- the point was made that Health and Safety generally may be perceived as 'red tape' and if there was to be any legislation in the future that will reduce the rules in this regard as it is perceived that it costs the Council a lot of money? Officers advised that the Government is proposing to review and streamline some of the legislation, but it is anticipated that the responsibilities and duties for the employer and employees will not change. Health and Safety may potentially be perceived as red tape, but consideration needs to be given to ensuring the Council meets all its legal duties, and is able to counter 'the compensation culture', together with the safety of the workforce, whilst taking a commonsense approach to Health and Safety, which the Health and Safety Team manages well. Officers stated that the Annual Report is a really positive report, and shows decreases compared to last year's figures. The Health and Safety Team's role is to get the message across to employees and support the organisation to ensure safe practices are followed that do not put people at risk;
- how many employees make up the Health and Safety Team? Officers advised there are two officers, with Health and Safety only being part of their role, which also covers Emergency Planning and Business Continuity.

Decided that the Council's Health and Safety performance for 2011/12 be noted.

S3/12 REVIEW OF THE HOUSING AND COMMUNITY SUPPORT TEAM

Members considered proposals for changes in the Council's Housing and Community Service Team. Members were:

- informed of the circumstances and details of the proposed changes;
- of the annual efficiency savings that the revised structure would deliver;
- of all the comments and feedback put forward during the consultation process.

Members made comments, asked questions and received responses from officers.

Decided that:

1. **the report and annual efficiency savings achieved as a result of the proposal be noted;**
2. **the proposals, including the deletion and creation of posts, be approved.**

(Members resolved to exclude the public from the meeting for this item of business on the grounds that it involved the disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraphs 1, 2 and 4 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972)

S4/12 REVIEW OF THE ICT TEAM

Members considered proposals for changes in the Council's ICT Team. Members were:

- informed of the circumstances and details of the proposed changes;
- of the annual efficiency savings that the revised structure would deliver;
- of all the comments and feedback put forward during the consultation process.

Members made comments, asked questions and received responses from officers.

Decided that:

1. **the report and annual efficiency savings achieved as a result of the proposal be noted;**
2. **the proposals, and any associated redundancies, be approved.**

(Members resolved to exclude the public from the meeting for this item of business on the grounds that it involved the disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraphs 1, 2 and 4 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972)

11.15am

Chairman