

STAFFORDSHIRE MOORLANDS DISTRICT COUNCIL

**JOINT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE (SMDC)
MEETING**

Minutes

**THURSDAY, 18 MAY 2017
(2.00 PM)**

PRESENT: Councillor A Forrester (Chair)

Representing the Council:

Councillors M Bowen, B Johnson and C Pearce

	<u>Representing the Employees:</u> S Robinson - Unison J Percival - Unison	
	<u>Officers</u>	
	Tanya Cooper -	Organisational Development & Transformation Manager
	Andrew Stokes -	Executive Director (Transformation) and Chief Finance Officer
	David Owen -	Corporate Health & Safety Advisor
	Sally Hampton -	Member & Community Support Services Officer

APOLOGIES: Councillors C R Jebb and L D Lea

Background Papers to these Minutes are exempt by virtue of the provisions of Section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972 - Part 1 of Schedule 12A, Paragraph 1 (Information relating to an individual) or Paragraph 4 (Labour relations matters).

Please note: These minutes are subject to approval by Cabinet.

1 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received from Councillors Jebb and Lea.

2 **MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

RESOLVED – That the Minutes of the meeting held on 26th January 2017 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

3 ANNUAL HEALTH & SAFETY REPORT 2016/17

David Owen - Corporate Health and Safety Advisor, presented a report which provided the Committee with information regarding the Council's health and safety activities and performance for the financial year 2016/17.

The annual report referred to key aspects of health and safety that occurred across High Peak Borough Council and Staffordshire Moorlands District Council. The report also provided supporting statistical information which could be found in the appendices of the main report.

There had been a total of 477 training places taken by staff attending H&S courses and 130 members of staff had also attended a Counter Terrorism training session.

A 30% increase had been seen in work place accidents but this wasn't seen to be significantly negative as the majority of the incidents were near misses. This type of incident had not been recorded previously. The frequency of monitoring in the Horticultural Section wasn't at the level expected and had attributed to this figure. The Council would strive to reduce this figure in the next financial year.

The Committee was also informed that the Council had applied for the ROSPA Gold Award and members would be updated on this in August/September 2017.

After liaising closely with the Fire and Rescue Service, fire risk assessments had been completed for all corporate buildings. There hadn't been any property fires at which Staffordshire Moorlands District Council had responsibility for and radon levels were still very low.

The officer thanked the unions, senior management team and councillors for their continued support.

Members of the Committee had the opportunity to ask questions and make comments. To summarise, the following points and questions were raised:-

Counter Terrorism Training for Councillors – The training session had been held by the Derbyshire Constabulary and wasn't currently offered by the Staffordshire Police Force. It was agreed that Councillor Mike Bowen - Portfolio Holder for Communities, would raise this matter at the Community Safety Partnership and David Owen would contact the relevant officer at Derbyshire Police.

Health Surveillance Policy – It was confirmed that a formal policy had been developed and preliminary work had been carried out with the Council's occupational health provider.

Refuted Accidents – An explanation of a refuted accident was explained which involved an alleged work place accident, evidence had suggested the accident hadn't occurred in the work place and the relevant form had not been completed.

ROSPA Award – Steve Robinson - Unison Representative, raised concerns in relation to the level of staff resources required to apply for the award and the need for it be well publicised to staff. David Owen advised, that the majority of the submission for the award consisted of a large portfolio of evidence which he would submit by the 5th June 2017. The ROSPA award was nationally recognised and gave

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a confidence boost to staff. It was agreed that if the Council was successful in achieving the award then it should be celebrated amongst staff.

Accidents by Service Area - It was queried whether the table should detail which authority the accidents had taken place at and it had been noted that accidents which involved the public had increased. David Owen advised that the public incidents had occurred at the Pavilion Gardens in Buxton. The senior management team would be informed of any issues that specifically related to one authority and if warranted would be highlighted at the Committee.

RESOLVED – That the report be **NOTED** along with the Council's H&S actions and performance for 2016/17.

FURTHER

RESOLVED – That the proposed activities for 2017/18 be **SUPPORTED**.

4 HEALTH & SAFETY PROCEDURES - ASBESTOS AND LEGIONELLA

The Committee received a report which set out the updates to the corporate health and safety policy, which would form part of the 'Electronic Health and Safety Portfolio' of guidance.

The Alliance Management Team (AMT) continued to demonstrate their commitment to an ongoing review of health and safety arrangements to ensure consistency, reduce duplication, and to ensure full legal compliance across the two councils.

The policies attached to the report detailed the arrangements in place to effectively manage legionella and asbestos in all council buildings. In ensuring compliance with the policies the Council could demonstrate it was effectively managing health and safety in the workplace.

The policies had been recently reviewed and reflected the new management structure and titles.

The documents attached to the report formed the overarching documents of the Council's 'Electronic Health and Safety Portfolio' and would assist Managers in meeting their obligations.

Discussion took place in relation to asbestos, health checks and risk assessments for legionella.

RESOLVED – That the report be **NOTED** and the attached policy documents be **APPROVED**.

5 **ORGANISATION DEVELOPMENT / HUMAN RESOURCES UPDATE**

Tanya Cooper - Organisational Development and Transformation Manager, informed the Committee that the quarterly meeting with the Unions had taken place and the following matters were discussed:-

Updated IT Policy – The existing, individual IT policies had been reviewed and condensed into one policy. The Union had been consulted, suggestions had been made and the final policy would be brought to the Standards Committee.

Policy for Pension Discretion – The Council's policy stipulated that the award of pension discretion would not be granted unless it was in the Council's interest to do so. The Union had not raised any concerns relating to this matter.

Flexible Working Pilot – A review had been undertaken, following the completion of the pilot which had identified a few issues. A revised 'Toolkit' would be presented to the Unions prior to the roll out to staff.

Questions received from the Refuse Team – Questions had been raised in relation to the retention of HGV Drivers and operatives apparently, not being aware of the progression bar within the pay scale. The Union representatives understood the current financial restraints but wished to advise the Committee that the staff thought there were pay anomalies which had demotivated the team. Tanya Cooper advised that she had been in contact with the Service Area to look at options to alleviate the situation, bearing in mind the proposed transfer arrangements to ANSA. HGV training had been requested and was in the process of being organised. The costs involved in removing the progression bar were explained and how this would affect the whole work force. The progression bar had been in place since 2008 was a topic of discussion at most team meetings.

RESOLVED – That letters of appointment be checked for the individuals concerned.

FURTHER RESOLVED – For the revised costs to be established in relation to progression above the bar and reported at the next meeting of the Committee.

6 **SICKNESS ABSENCE SUMMARY**

Tanya Cooper introduced the summary which indicated that sickness absence was off-track in terms of the annual target (An average of 9.91 days per Full-Time Employee after the 4th quarter with an annual target of 9 days). This was a total of 1,826 days (around 3.78% of all working days) at a cost of almost £140,000. 15 long term sickness cases accounted for 1,146 of these days.

It was noted that there had been a significant number of stress related cases which combined of both work and personal related stress. These members of staff had been referred to Occupational Health. 20 stage 1 meetings and 4 stage 2 meetings had been conducted. 1 staff member had been placed on adjusted duties and 1 had been placed on a phased return following occupational health/GP advice.

The Human Resources Team monitored sickness monthly, made early contact with staff absent from work due to sickness and home visits were also made available to staff.

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David Owen shared his own experience of long term absence from work. He explained how well he and his family were supported by the Council during this time.

Other members of the Committee also made positive comments relating to the management of sickness absence.

DECIDED:- That the report be **NOTED**.

7 **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

Tuesday 18th July 2017.

8 **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

There were no other items of business.

The meeting closed at 3.45pm

_____ Chair _____ Date

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