

Agenda Item No: 8 **Report No:** 182/14

Report Title: Joint Health and Safety Forum Activities from April to October 2014

Report To: Employment Committee **Date:** 8 December 2014

Cabinet Member:

Ward(s) Affected: All

Report By: Jill Yeates

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Purpose of Report:

To report the main activities of the Joint Health and Safety Forum from 1 April 2014 to 31 October 2014.

Officer's Recommendation:

- 1 To consider the issues reported.
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Reasons for Recommendations

- 1 The Employment Committee Meetings will consider health and safety issues as specified in Section 5 Remit of the Employment Committee Part 2.4 c and Part 2.5 a and g to m of the Lewes District Council Constitution.
- 2 **Information**

Specific health and safety matters are taken first to the manager(s) concerned, and then discussed in the Forum where relevant across sections. Over the past six months, the following issues have been acted upon.

 - 2.1 The Health and Safety Plan is currently on PAM and will be moved in December to Covalent as the Council will not be using PAM beyond the end of this year. We are currently on target with the Plan.
 - 2.2 The new Risk Assessment (RA) and Safe System of Work (SSOW) form formats were agreed by the Forum and then put on to InfoLink: (RA <http://intranet/staff/11443.asp>) and (SSOW

<http://intranet/staff/13976.asp>) and into use throughout the Council. There are generic RAs and SSOW under the Health, Safety and Welfare pages on InfoLink to ensure that time isn't wasted by managers and staff doing the same RAs/SSOW.

- 2.3** The profile of health and safety within the council has been raised through the internal training of all managers over the summer jointly by management and Unison representatives. Managers are now working through a six-month programme of Health and Safety training bites for staff during team meetings, so that all staff are aware of their roles and responsibilities in health and safety at work. 'Health and Safety' is also a standard item on the agenda of every team meeting and relevant issues are discussed.
- 2.4** Other health and safety training needs identified through RAs, SSOW and appraisals, which are general issues, are discussed and agreed in the Forum. For example, approximately 130 people, including all of waste and recycling, housing maintenance and those working in the Tourist Information Centres have had basic first aid training, including dealing with bleeding, cuts, strokes, heart attacks, fits and seizures, and the use of defibrillators, during the autumn. Vehicle and driving safety training are now being carried out for all those driving council vehicles.
- 2.5** The Forum has agreed that some aspects of health and safety are embedded into our other systems; for example, the requirement for Display Screen Equipment (DSE) e-training and assessment is now listed on the appraisal form to ensure that it has happened annually for those using DSE during their working day.
- 2.6** The audit form has been agreed and the programme based on risk also agreed. Audits start in December. Managers are also responsible for inspections of their own areas, and the audit will include a review of the records of inspections carried out.
- 2.7** Accident and near miss statistics are discussed every month, and the Forum examines any trends and their causes. The statistics are presented graphically, then subsequently circulated to all buildings and put up on notice boards, as well as InfoLink, and in Corporate Briefs for discussion at team meetings.
- 2.8** Work-related stress and its monitoring is discussed every month. Wellbeing month has been more of a success this year than when it was crammed into one week last year. The stress monitoring group will discuss integrating some of the offers throughout the year.

HR reviewed the Stress Policy and Procedures taking the Unison stress survey into account after discussions in the Forum. Stress questions were also included in the Staff Survey this year after discussion in the Forum, and HR have relaunched the 'staff support contacts' scheme to help staff to deal with stress amongst other things. The Agile Working Policy reviewed by HR was also discussed at the Forum and feedback given before the final version.

- 2.9** Other policies have been revised or produced, discussed and agreed. They include the Working at Height Policy (new), the Fire Policy and Procedures (revised), and the smoking rules have now been revised to include e-cigarettes.
- 2.10** Several wide-ranging policies are currently being revised and new procedures developed by working parties reporting back to the Forum. These include the Lone Working Policy and Procedures, the Asbestos Policy and Procedures and Driving (Council vehicles, and own vehicles on council business) Policies and Procedures.
- 2.11** The Forum has also initiated the Council's purchase of two defibrillators – one at Southover House (sited externally for public and council use and provided free by SECAMB) and one at Fort Road (sited internally for council and visitor use).
- 2.12** Finally, the Forum keeps updated with legal changes and health and safety developments which may affect the Council. In the last six months, these have included the appointment of a new Health and Safety Minister, Mark Harper, in August, who also deals with Disability; one of the three Health and Safety bills announced in the Queen's Speech - the Heroism Bill which will provide for the courts to take into account where a person acts heroically, responsibly or for the benefit of others by the courts; the new GRIP scheme which will come into effect in 2015 when safety footwear will be labelled from 1 to 5 to classify resistance to slips, trips and falls; the HSE's new advice on use of hand tools (INDG296) and on the use of Compaction equipment in Waste operations; and the advice published for employers on the need to conduct thermal comfort risk assessments in the workplace for summer heat.

It looks as though some health and safety law will be taken away from self-employed people. However, this won't affect LDC as we will continue to contract people with the same Health and Safety requirements.

3 Financial Appraisal

There are no direct financial implications of this report.

4 Legal Implications

The Legal Services Department does not need to comment specifically on the Forum's actions.

5 Sustainability Implications

I have not completed the Sustainability Implications Questionnaire as this Report is exempt from the requirement because it is a progress report.

6 Risk Management Implications

I have not completed the Risk Management Implications Questionnaire as this Report is exempt from the requirement because it is a progress report.

7 Equality Screening

I have not completed the Equality Questionnaire as this Report is exempt from the requirement because it is a progress report.

8 Background Papers

There are no background papers. A couple of links to InfoLink have been provided.

9 Appendices

There are no appendices.