

**Agenda Item No:** 9 **Report No:** 74/16  
**Report Title:** Health and Safety in Lewes District Council May 2016  
**Report To:** Employment Committee **Date:** 13 June 2016  
**Cabinet Member:**  
**Ward(s) Affected:**  
**Report By:** Jill Yeates  
**Contact Officer(s)-** Jill Yeates  
**Name(s):** Jill Yeates  
**Post Title(s):** Health and Safety Officer  
**E-mail(s):** [jill.yeates@lewes.gov.uk](mailto:jill.yeates@lewes.gov.uk)  
**Tel No(s):** 01273 7106276

---

#### **Purpose of Report:**

To report representative examples of LDC Health and Safety activity.

#### **Officer's Recommendation:**

- 1 To note the report.
- 

#### **Reasons for Recommendations**

1

- 1.1 This report to Employment Committee provides information about health and safety levels and activities relating to items 2.4 (c), and 2.5 (j), (k) and (m) of the Lewes District Council Constitution Section 5 Remit of the Employment Committee.
- 1.2 In December 2015, a report presented to this Committee covering the activities of the Joint Health and Safety Forum for the previous year detailed areas covered and achievements. The Forum is now meeting bimonthly, and the next report on activities is likely to be in December 2016. However, there have been some important events recently which illustrate the council's external health and safety profile and this report outlines some of these events.

2 **Information**

## **2.1 Overall Health and Safety Executive contact**

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) is the government organisation responsible for leading, and enforcing, health and safety at work in the UK. Whilst our own Environmental Health Officers enforce health and safety in many of the organisations in our District, the HSE are responsible for enforcement in local authorities (amongst other workplaces). We don't usually have much interaction with the HSE, so to have three inspections/investigations very close together is highly unusual. The managers and staff who have been involved have done really well in their achievements, and should be given credit for the fact that the HSE must have a reasonably good view of health and safety at Lewes District Council at the moment. Details are below.

## **2.2 HSE Inspection**

Susie Matthews, HM Inspector of Health and Safety from the Health and Safety Executive (HSE), gave Greg Martin, Waste Operations Manager, three weeks' notice that she was coming to do a 'routine' inspection of our household waste and recycling collection service. She was with us for nearly six hours on 31 March, talking about policies, procedures, processes (including viewing accident statistics, inspection notes, risk assessments and safe systems of work), and travelling out inspecting various crews as they worked. The actions that the HSE can take are prosecution, prohibition notices (to stop work immediately), improvement notices (to improve within 21 days), written 'advice' which must be followed, or verbal advice.

Ms Matthews gave us four pieces of verbal advice at the end of her inspection which included more job specific manual handling refresher training, and inclusion of hearing protection checks on the inspection monitoring sheets – as well as more guidance on manual handling practices, and reversing assistant practices on those sheets. With regard to Agency staff, she was concerned about their receiving appropriate training and induction before starting work with us – especially those with very poor English, including clear manual handling and reversing assistant training.

We felt that this was a very fair outcome, and credit is due to Scot Reid, Greg Martin, Kevin Mansell and Julia Black for their intensive preparation work for the visit. We now have plans in place to fulfil these requirements, and are communicating with Ms Matthews about our progress.

## **2.3 HSE Investigation – Waste and Recycling**

There seems to have been an unfortunate misunderstanding by an anonymous 'notifier' who raised a Waste concern with the HSE about the use of a compaction vehicle for infectious waste. Greg Martin was asked for information about this issue, and evidence, by the HSE. Greg

provided his response the next day, explaining that they were testing a demonstration vehicle for collecting non-infectious and offensive waste for a week. Drivers (all experienced in these existing duties) were given instruction, and accompanied by a team leader during initial usage. There are already risk assessments and safe systems of work for these collections because they are not new (and these had been provided to the staff). The feedback from the staff on the new vehicles was all positive, and no concerns were raised. Infectious waste will continue to be collected by a separate round with no compaction in that vehicle.

Greg's answer was described as 'comprehensive' and helpful, and our approach appropriate, and the case was closed that day by the HSE.

## **2.4 HSE Investigation – Parks**

Andy Frost, Specialist (Parks and Cemeteries), had an email from the HSE because there had been an accident on a Parkour facility (a free-running obstacle course) outside our District, where there had been a serious head injury. As a result, the HSE are checking Parkour facilities to see what other operators have done with regard to safety (and one of the Sussex authorities has been threatened with a prohibition notice about theirs). They inspected our Parkour in Valley Rd Newhaven, without notice, and then asked Andy some questions because they want to find out about good practice, as well as poor practice, in Parkours.

Andy confirmed that the facility was installed in 2010. When it was installed, as there were no specific standards available (the British Standard was introduced in 2013, BS10075:2013), it was decided that from a safety point of view, it would be treated like a play area – therefore mixed safety surfaces were installed. Andy was thanked for providing the information requested and also received the following comment back from the inspector: "I am also pleased to read that in the absence of any specific standards available, the Council decided to err on the side of caution and proactively take steps to reduce the risk of serious injury, such as head injuries, associated with the use of high play equipment, by installing the safety surface throughout." Andy and Christopher Bibb, who installed this facility after consultation with local people, deserve credit for good safety foresight even before the BS standard was available – with which our Parkour does, in fact, conform.

## **2.5 Litter picking on fast roads**

Last summer, the HSE contacted Chichester District Council because their contractors were litter picking on the A27 in a manner which didn't seem safe to the HSE Inspector who saw them in action. The safety officer there immediately suspended all litter picking on main or difficult roads (thus avoiding a prohibition order from the HSE), and let the rest of

Sussex safety officers know. We also immediately suspended all litter picking on main and difficult roads.

It quickly became obvious that this isn't an easy problem to solve. What was clear is that the HSE will not accept people litter-picking on 'fast' roads without some sort of road/lane closure – and this is complicated and expensive. Greg Martin was keen to look at the problem across Sussex, as were all the Sussex Safety Officers, so he wrote a report, and we arranged for the April Safety Officers quarterly meeting to be a joint one with Waste and Transport managers, and the traffic police. With LDC as the catalyst, and Greg's report as the agenda, this was held in Brighton in April and has set the base for some joint working on litter picking across Sussex. Greg, and I (separately), have also been through his ideas and our approach with Janet Viney (in charge of waste activities) from the HSE, and she is positive about our approach.

We are now working on different approaches for different areas, and on sharing generic risk assessments and safe systems of work across Sussex, and writing our own specific risk assessments for specific parts of the roads in our district.

## **2.6 Emergency procedures**

The new 'Bomb Threats, Suspect Packages and White Powder Incidents' Policy and Procedure has recently been agreed and is on InfoLink: <http://intranet/staff/14551.asp>

All reception, mail room and customer hub staff have been trained in how to recognise suspicious letters and packages by the Sussex Police Counter Terrorism unit, who have congratulated us on our approach and speed of training. However, the Policy doesn't cover details of exactly what to do if there is an alarm because otherwise any assailant would know what was going to happen. Instead, the Counter Terrorism staff are working with us for a session in September to help senior management decide the procedures, which would then be implemented as and when necessary. The rest of us would need to do as we are told at the time.

## **2.7 Insurance report**

In May last year, we were interviewed by our employers liability (EL) and public liability (PL) insurer, Zurich Municipal, about our risk management standards. They also did the same interviews with several of their other Sussex local authority clients, and are holding a meeting for all this summer to discuss appropriate ways forward to further reduce risks.

We achieved 'minimum' acceptable standards on our motor and property areas, and 'good' standards on our combined liability areas (which include legislation, staff management and training, maintenance and inspections, contractors and partnerships, hiring of facilities and claims

management). One of the outcomes was “There are good systems in place to manage health and safety”. Suggestions for improvement include producing a formal manual handling policy across the council, and to have a training matrix in place linked to risk assessments. These will be considered after the joint meeting in July.

### **3 Financial Appraisal**

The Health and Safety Officer does not have a budget. Health and safety is part of every manager’s responsibility and the costs therefore come out of their budgets; where property, fittings and items are involved, Facilities provide the funds.

### **4 Legal Implications**

The Legal Services Department does not need to comment specifically on the accident statistics as it is a progress report. The Health and Safety Officer has responsibility for advising management of their legal health and safety responsibilities.

### **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.

### **9 Appendices**

There are no appendices.