

**MINUTES**  
**JOINT NEGOTIATING**  
**26 JUNE 2017**

**Councillors:** Herbert Chapman  
Taylor  
C Wyatt-Lowe

<b>Officers:</b>	Michelle Anderson	Corporate Support Team Leader- Democracy
	Paul O'Day	Corporate Health & Safety Lead Officer
	Chris Plested	UNISON
	Anne Stunell	Human Resources Team Leader
	Rebecca Twidle	Member Support Officer

The meeting began at 6.30 pm

The Chairman began the meeting by welcoming Councillor C Wyatt-Lowe to the Committee.

**9**                    **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Tina Boggins sent her apologies.

**10**                   **MINUTES**

The notes of the meeting held on 5 December 2016 were agreed by the members present and signed by the Chairman.

**11**                   **MATTERS ARISING**

None.

**12**                   **HEALTH & SAFETY - VERBAL UPDATE**

P O'Day updated the group on the Health & Safety issues facing the Council. He said that a prosecution of Health and Safety issues at Cupid Green was looking likely. A review of Health & Safety (H&S) issues was undertaken by Corporate Health & Safety (CH&S) and identified 12 work streams that need attention (See attachment). Each had been given to an Assistant Director to lead.

He said that he would only go through some of the key areas of risk, but would also forward a copy of the 12 work streams, to ensure that it would be included within the Minutes, so that the Committee were fully aware of all the work streams. He said

that all areas were ongoing; some would take longer than others, meaning that they would conclude at different times.

Lone Working - P O'Day said this was progressing well; training was being carried out by Reliance and The Suzy Lampugh Trust. Staff who have been identified as lone working (i.e. visiting 3<sup>rd</sup> Party sites alone) are to be given a lone working device and attending the training mandatory. Managers will be given a report on usage every month by Reliance this will identify who has used or not used the device, how many amber alerts or red alerts have been raised and by who.

Noise at work/whole body vibration – a specialist survey has been conducted. For whole body vibration (WBV) a few items equipment used by CSG and the cemeteries are just over the actions levels. Requests have been made of the teams to monitor the usage of these vehicles throughout the day. For noise, this too identified some areas where the lower exposure action value (80dB) was exceeded and a few areas of work were above the upper exposure action level (85dB). This included the Old Town Hall.

Adventure playgrounds – following inspections a number of items of equipment were defective, there is some ongoing work to deal with the immediate issues and work is looking at more longer term options.

Councillor Taylor said that the ongoing court case appeared to be taking longer than expected, and asked when it was expected to be concluded. P O'Day said that they can take up to three years to prosecute but it was up to the Health and Safety Executive.

Councillor Taylor also asked P O'Day to clarify exactly how many items of equipment had issues with whole body vibrations. P O'Day explained that it was not just a simple number as the risk of the equipment was calculated on the level of vibrations, the length of time it was being used. Councillor Taylor asked for clarification about the number of vehicles at Cupid Green where the vibration levels presented a risk. Again, P O'Day said that a similar calculation needed to be applied to these vehicles (level of vibration/length of use). Councillor Taylor accepted this explanation. P O'Day also confirmed that these calculations were being collected, and inputted as data to see if it met the required standard.

Councillor Chapman asked P O'Day about the noise levels at Cupid Green; was an alarm activated when the noise limit was reached? P O'Day said that there was no alarm as such. He said that the type of waste being processed created the level of noise; for example, the level of noise created when glass was processed was substantially higher than when cardboard was. However, this type of waste was not processed all day, and was only processed for short durations. P O'Day said that the wear of protective earmuff was not mandatory at the lower exposure levels, however they had been advised to look at revising this and a future policy would be recommending that it would be mandatory.

Leading on from this, Councillor C Wyatt-Lowe asked if staff tended to wear/use the available protective equipment. P O'Day replied that the observations made of staff was that staff tended to make good use of the equipment. He also confirmed that

protective equipment was available to all staff and that DBC had a responsibility to provide this equipment.

Councillor Chapman thanked P O'Day for the update.

### **13**                    **HR - VERBAL UPDATE**

A Stunell began by updating the committee that the new People Strategy scheme had been launched. Similarly to P O'Day, she said that she would only go through some of the key action points. There was to be an ongoing review of the programme's effectiveness.

The first area is our Leading in Dacorum programme and mandatory training. The intention was for it to be skills based training, supporting managers and for aspiring managers. There is also a separate project with emphasis on coaching and mentoring, with the view to creating a wider coaching culture. A Stunell confirmed that as part of this scheme, she was currently in the process of completing her own coaching qualification, which she completes in October.

Alongside this, HR are in the process of moving forward with the Investors in People (IIP) accreditation. DBC are currently on IIP 5, but are carrying out work to with a view to gaining the new standard IIP 6. The strategic assessment for this is due to take place in March 2018. A Stunell noted that this was quite expensive, at a cost of £13k. She said that the cost of this needed to be considered against the work being done as part of the People Strategy that was being developed, and to weigh up the value.

Councillor Chapman asked A Stunell whether the intention of the coaching training was a set plan or taking a more 'ad hoc' approach to supporting staff. She re-iterated that she was currently working on her own coaching qualification; however there were only a limited amount of trained staff in the organisation. She said that there was a support programme for internal coaching within year 2 of the programme. They were currently looking at partnering with outside organisations such as Toyota in order to further develop the programme. Councillor Chapman requested a copy of the People Strategy action plan.

Councillor Taylor said that the development of aspiring managers must also be balanced against the need to develop all individuals within the council. He also highlighted the importance of individuals taking responsibility of their own development, particularly long serving individuals. A Stunell agreed.

The appraisal scheme was also being reviewed as part of the People Strategy to ensure that it fitted the vision and values of DBC. Matt Rawdon was leading on this project; consideration was being given to whether the system was fit for purpose? Did it motivate both managers and employees? Spot checks were being carried out on various managers' appraisals to consider the general standard of them currently.

A Stunell also highlighted an ongoing CMT strand, reviewing Workforce Data; this was to review key strategic trends in the workforce (e.g. turnover, sickness) to ensure that ongoing business needs were met.

A Stunell said that Reward and Recognition was also being reviewed as part of the People Strategy; focusing in particular on the latter part. As an example of this, she said that management was focusing on recognition of long service and retirement. Currently when an individual retires this tended to be dealt with by the manager and team through a more informal process; however as part of the People Strategy, there was a view to making this more corporate.

A Stunell noted the First Care Sickness Management system; she said that since adopting the system and working on the project, sickness absence had dropped by 20%. She said that a formal review of the sickness absence policies was due to take place in May, However there were some issues with dates, therefore stakeholders were getting together to discuss these on 7 July.

Councillor C Wyatt-Lowe asked if any benchmarking had been conducted as to DBC's sickness absences against other local authorities. A Stunell said that this was difficult as other local authorities did not process waste disposal, while DBC did, which had a key impact on sickness absence figures. Councillor Wyatt-Lowe said that, if available, it would be useful to review sickness tables for DBC and other local authorities to compare. A Stunell confirmed that she would send this information to the committee.

Councillor Chapman asked where an employee was suffering from long term sickness, how often would that individual have to contact First Care – would they have to phone each day? A Stunell explained that an employee are required to contact First Care at the start and end of their absence and also if there are any changes or an original 'fit note' needed to be extended. This would need to take place each and every time that this 'fit note' expired and needed to be extended.

C Plested said that the unions felt that the sickness absence target of 8 days was not fair, particularly on individuals based at Cupid Green where work was more physically demanding. The Unions felt that this target needed to be 'eased off'. A Stunell noted that the days lost is currently 7. 5 against a target of 8; she understood that all parties were in agreement about this target. It was agreed that there would be an opportunity to discuss this matter further at the upcoming meeting.

A Stunell updated the Committee on the Apprenticeship Levy programme. She said that a great deal of work had gone into the project , and that the programme was at the procurement stage; DBC were currently waiting for Herts County Council to finish their part in the process, and that the allocated budget of £80k remained unspent. The current proposal was to use the apprenticeship levy to fund upskilling current employees. The committee questioned money being taken out of the apprenticeship fund; A Stunell explained that this budget could not be spent on salaries, but only on training; therefore this meant that there were issues with simply recruiting 16 apprentices, as future salaries could not be accounted for out of this budget.

A Stunell noted the ongoing strand in respect of induction programmes; this included developing an electronic induction handbook. Councillor Taylor made the observation that, as with the electronic copy of the Constitution on DBC's website, an electronic copy as opposed to a hard copy ensured that employees always had access to the most up to date document, containing the current policies.

C Plested highlighted a concern about individuals at Cupid Green who were unable to read and write; A Stunell confirmed that managers or HR were always available to support any such individuals with queries about the induction programme.

A Stunell noted the ongoing positive working relationship with the trade union; She noted that Tina Boggins would be leaving in July, and commented that this would be a loss to all involved parties.

A Stunell also noted that the People Strategy had ongoing strands to review DBC's commitment to Equality and Diversity (with the view to achieving accreditation); DBC's Terms & Conditions', as well as the recruitment process. A Stunell noted that where DBC were unable to recruit staff, they used Pertemps recruitment agency to provide any short term temporary cover. Councillor Chapman asked if efforts were being made to reduce the use of temporary staff; A Stunell confirmed that this was a key aspect of the recruitment work stream.

A Stunell also confirmed that DBC's gender pay review must be published by March 2018 for April 2018. She said that there were some issues with this, as Finance struggled to get the required information from the Payroll provider. Councillor Chapman asked who this was, and A Stunell confirmed it was Serco.

Councillor Chapman thanked A Stunell for the update.

#### **14                    UNION - VERBAL UPDATE**

C Plested referred to A Stunell's earlier point that Tina Boggins was leaving; he said that the union would struggle to replace her. He had no further update.

The Meeting ended at 7.30 pm