

MINUTES
JOINT NEGOTIATING
7 MARCH 2016

Present:

Members:

Councillors: S Adshead
Brown
Herbert Chapman
Taylor
Whitman

Officers: Paul O'Day Corporate Health & Safety Lead Officer
Anne Stunell Human Resources Team Leader

The meeting began at 6.30 pm

1 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

The constitution of the Joint Committee sets out that to be quorate both elements - Councillors and Trade Union/Staff side - have to have three members present. Some disappointment was expressed that no apologies had been received from the union side and so the committee was not quorate but those present agreed to proceed and discuss the items on the agenda without making any decisions.

2 **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 7 September 2015 were agreed by the members present and signed by the Chairman.

3 **MATTERS ARISING**

None.

4 **HEALTH & SAFETY UPDATE**

Councillor Chapman took the meeting through the report provided by Paul O'Day, the Corporate Health and Safety Officer, and the updates set out in the agenda including:

- New Chairs
- DSE Software
- Hand Arm Vibration (HAV)
- Level 2 Principles of Health & Safety Risk Assessments
- Manual Handling Training

- Model office Risk Assessments
- Introduction of the Alcohol Policy
- Internal Audit of Corporate Health & Safety

Chairs

P O'Day expanded on the purchase of 350 of the new DSE compliant chairs which have now been delivered to the Civic Centre, for current use and transfer to the Forum.

Of the DSE compliant chairs removed from the Civic Centre 20 have been redistributed to other DSE sites such as the Old Town Hall and sheltered housing schemes. 38 have also been given to staff for use at home.

HAV/Carpal Tunnel Syndrome

Following notifications to the HSE of 5 cases of HAV/Carpal Tunnel Syndrome, the HSE visited Clean, Safe and Green and have served 2 Improvement Notices.

Since then the HAV Risk Assessments have been reviewed, 73 CSG and 5 Cemetery staff have been given HAV awareness training.

P O'Day went on to outline the various Health & Safety courses that have been arranged. He bemoaned the fact that they were still encountering a high volume of cancellations and last minute withdrawals from attendees and that these are proving costly.

Alcohol testing

Cabinet and full Council have approved the amendments to the Alcohol and Drugs Policy, which now incorporates alcohol testing.

Communications and staff awareness seminars to be delivered prior to the live launch on the new policy on the 1/5/16.

5 VERBAL UPDATE ON HR MATTERS

A Stunell gave the meeting an update on recent matters and developments in DBC Human Resources.

Apprentices

2 Apprentices have been arranged for Building Control and Planning.

First care sickness management

The software, systems and processes supporting sickness management has been in place since August. Unfortunately the sickness policy has not been agreed with the Unions and the two sides are in dispute.

The whole scheme has been reviewed and A Stunell explained to Members how the policy is now operated and the process followed. The new process is providing masses of information which is of use to the management in dealing with sickness and the handling of sickness.

Unfortunately there has been a spike up to 10.9 days a year but this was anticipated, is being monitored and dealt with in line with the council's policies.

Mental Health first Aiders

This scheme is moving forward and members of staff have been identified and trained to assist in supporting staff that are affected by stress.

Replacement Employment HR System

A replacement Employment HR System is being considered. The option to move HR management over an external provide is also being considered.

Facilities Management

The transfer of the current employees from Serco to the Council is underway and a further TUPE transfer out to another external provider for the Forum is possible at the end of the year.

6 UNION ITEMS

T Boggins raised some issues of concern for the Trades Union side including:

- The category of illnesses coming before Sickness Capability meetings.
- Written warnings being issued regardless of the severity of the illness.
- Absence Management Policy; the inclusion of industrial injury in sickness reviews

T Boggins pointed out that dealing with the sickness absence policy is causing a lot of work for the union reps. I was her impression that historical reports were being used when considering how to deal with staff – she asserted that staff were the subject to the use of ten years old data.

She moved on to say that at Cupid Green sickness management does not show evidence of appropriate and effective phased return to work being applied and workers are released if after four weeks they are not able to return to 100% work.

The meeting considered this issue with Cllr Chapman saying that his belief was that if a member of was shown as capable to do a job then they were encouraged to apply for any vacancies that may arise.

Anne Stunell added that in many cases reasonable adjustments to hours have been considered but there is a tendency for these to be unending and that some employees have remained on reduced hours for unreasonable extended periods.

7 ANY OTHER BUSINESS / FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

Timing of Meetings

A Stunell enquired if holding these meetings a 6.30 still suited everyone and wondered if this time may be the reason that Trade Union reps are finding it difficult to attend.

However there was general agreement that the time remain at 6.30.

8 DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS - TIMINGS

The dates of future meetings were agreed as follows:

Meeting Date - start time 6.30 pm	Date agenda to be circulated

Monday 13 June 2016	Monday 23 May
Monday 5 September 2016	Monday 15 August
Monday 5 December 2016	Monday 14 November

The Meeting ended at 7.27 pm