

# Members/Trades Unions Joint Consultation & Safety Panel

Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 9 December 2014, at Riverside House, Royal Leamington Spa at 2.30pm.

## **Present:**

Employers representatives: Councillors Barrott and Kinson.

Trades Unions' representatives: Mr Crump, Mr Foster and Mr Lynch.

Also present: Amy Carnall (Civic and Committee Services Officer), Ian Carden (Health and Safety Adviser), Tracy Dolphin (HR Manager) and Richard Hall (Head of Health and Community Protection).

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Copping and Kirton and Mr Chapleo.

It was the Employers' turn to Chair the meeting, so Councillor Kinson took the Chair.

## **7. Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

## **8. Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 4 June 2014 were taken as read and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

Under matters arising from the minutes, Mr Hall introduced the Council's new Health and Safety Advisor, Mr Carden who had started with the authority that week.

The meeting was advised that regular fire drills, reviews and weekly inspections would be undertaken by safety representatives and any issues arising should be fed back to Mr Carden for action.

Mr Foster welcomed Mr Carden, stating that the Trades' Unions had always maintained a good working relationship with the Health and Safety Advisor, which he hoped to continue. He assured Mr Carden that he was welcome to contact Unison whenever necessary.

Mr Hall advised that although there had been no handover from his predecessor, Mr Carden's manager, Mr Helm had provided continuity and supplied extensive handover notes. It was also reported that a temporary member of staff had been in place during the interim period.

Mr Carden thanked those present for their warm welcome and advised that although he was new to this position, he had a good working knowledge of the Council because he had been based at Newbold Comyn Leisure Centre

as a swimming teacher. He stated that he was looking forward to embracing his new role and continuing the good relationship built up with Members and the Trades' Unions.

9. **Corporate Health and Safety**

The Panel received a report from Health and Community Protection which summarised the "employee lost working time accidents" that had been reported from the start of May 2014 to the end of July 2014 with a table showing comparative accident data tracked over the same period.

There had been two accidents reported. One involved a staff member from Housing & Property Services based at Tannery Court in Kenilworth. The accident had resulted in a fractured wrist and 27 working days being lost due to the incident.

Upon investigation of the accident site, no further action was required.

The second accident involved a staff member from Neighbourhood Services, based at Riverside House.

The staff member had received a bloody and bruised nose as a consequence of walking into the glass doors at the staff entrance. On inspection of the accident site, no further action was required.

**Resolved** that the report be noted.

10. **Health and Safety Advisor**

This item had been requested on the agenda following concerns that the Council would be operating for a period of time without a Health and Safety Advisor.

However, following the introduction of Mr Carden and the assurances given by Mr Hall at the beginning of the meeting, officers and Members were satisfied that the appropriate measures had been in place following Mr Richardson's departure.

11. **National Pay Award 2014/15**

Mr Crump advised that the pay award had now been settled but the one off payment in December would not be consolidated into pay, which did not help pension payments.

Full details of the pay award were available to staff on the Council's intranet system and the meeting was advised that there would be no pay dispute for next year.

The threat of a second strike had been called off, following a ballot.

Mr Foster explained that Unison were not happy with the percentage pay rise offered and reminded the meeting that the gap which the four year pay freeze had left between the private and public sectors was now getting

larger. He advised that talks were continuing between Unison, Unite and the GMB because some employees had been offered nothing.

**Resolved** that the report be noted.

12. **Cleaning Contract – Ocean CC Update**

Mr Foster updated the Panel on the cleaning contract the Council had with Ocean CC. He advised that health and safety and management in general of this company were sub-standard and that staff morale was poor.

Mr Foster hoped that the Council would be able to bring the cleaning contract in house in due course, with a report expected to be submitted to the Executive in January 2015.

Mr Thompson, Head of Housing and Property Services, advised that officers were keen to terminate the contract with Ocean CC because there was a discrepancy between what they were providing and what they had tendered for originally. The company were requesting that consumables had to be provided and had not factored this in to their tender.

Mr Foster advised that there had been a high loss of staff who were struggling on the basic minimum wage.

Ms Dolphin advised that a meeting was due to take place shortly to discuss the potential to TUPE staff across and to bring in a substitute company in the meantime.

Councillor Kinson advised that whilst he was mindful that the Council needed to keep costs of services down, the cheapest contract was not always the best. Good quality management was a necessity and he hoped that the Executive report in January would flag up the failings with this company and provide a way forward.

**Resolved** that the update be noted.

(The meeting ended at 3.05 pm)