

NHDC Health and Safety and Staff Consultation Forum Meeting

4 September 2013

Committee Room 1

Draft Minutes

Present: SCF: Kerry Shorrocks, Susanne Gow, Claire Morgan, Dee Levett, Chris Carter, Sue Graves, Becky Coates (sub for Helen Turner), Kiren Kalirai (minutes)

H&S: Andrew Cavanagh, Amanda Locke, Les Davison, Kalminder Sahota, Fiona Timms, Karen Pulham, Michael Wray, Will Horsman, Vic Quashie, Vic Godfrey,

Apologies: John Robinson, David Scholes, Christina Corr, Helen Turner, Gary Bell, Ian Fullstone, Kevin Conheaney

Circulation: Those present, John Robinson, David Scholes, Christina Corr, Helen Turner, Gary Bell, Ian Fullstone, Kevin Conheaney

HEALTH & SAFETY COMMITTEE

Actions

1. Appoint SCF Chair

Andrew Cavanagh was present to chair the Health & Safety part of the meeting and it was agreed that and Chris Carter would chair the SCF meeting.

2. Apologies

Apologies were received from Gary Bell, Ian Fullstone and Kevin Conheaney (H&S Committee) and John Robinson, David Scholes, Christina Corr and Helen Turner (SCF) Becky Coates was covering for Helen Turner.

3. Minutes of the Last Health & Safety Meeting

There being no outstanding action, the minutes were agreed.

4. Directorate/Trade Union update

There were no Directorate updates.

VG advised that he had been approached by an officer seeking clarification on the policy of moving hot drinks around the building (i.e from drinks machine on 5th floor). In discussion, it was noted that as part of the office accommodation review, work would be undertaken on improving kitchen facilities. Views from staff would also be included via feedback from staff survey.

AC suggested that we could provide staff cups with plastic lids on in order to prevent spillages when moving around the building. It was agreed that they would investigate this. It was also agreed that LD would look into whether any spillages had been reported to ascertain the how severe the issue was. **LD**

BC requested that trays be provided for staff to carry drinks – LD confirmed that staff are to contact Property Services with such a request and that drinks holders would be made available.

5. Risk Manager Update

The Risk Manager advised that there had been one claim for injury since the last update. This was a vehicle accident – driving whilst at work and it was reported that there was a whiplash injury and bruising.

6. Health and Safety Officer Update

LD advised no changes to H & S Legislation yet – changes are communicated twice a year and are expected to be received in October so he shall communicate relevant changes at the next meeting.

H & S Policy, Strategy and Procedural documents are now on the intranet and available.

LD to put message out on Intranet to notify staff that H & S documents are now updated and available. **LD**

Workplace inspections have been completed now and no major issues were reported

Vehicle document checks are also mostly completed – only 5 members of staff are outstanding and these staff members have been notified that they are no longer authorised to drive on behalf of the Council and any mileage reimbursement requests will be declined until we have seen the relevant documents or until we are informed that they no longer drive for business needs.

6 accidents have been reported since the last meeting. Those were

- Bruising/swelling to toes
- Pain to wrist
- Swollen wrist
- Fractured wrist (hairline crack) reported to Riddor
- Cut to finger
- Whiplash

There has been no serious/RIDDOR reportable accidents from our monitored contractors.

7 AOB

No further business to discuss

STAFF CONSULTATION FORUM

Actions

1. Minutes of the Last Meeting

There being no outstanding action, the minutes were agreed.

Andrew Cavanagh explained to the meeting that the decision to purchase the DCO had been made and that the purchase was being put in motion. This would mean that a programme of refurbishment will follow which is expected to start from April 2014. It was planned to set up the Office Accommodation working group again.

VG confirmed that IT are sending text messages to home workers when they expect service disruption. However, there have been a number of messages that have bounced back due employees changing their numbers. He asked that employees inform them of any changes to numbers as soon as possible so texts can be received when required.

2. Green Issues/Ideas

KS said she had been asked to mention that paper towels were still finding their way into the food waste bins on some floors. KS requested that SCF raise this with their colleagues to try and resolve it.

KS asked what feedback staff had had from friends and family on the new Waste & Recycling scheme. Overall the response was that it is a good scheme. There has been some comments that the compostible liners disintegrate very quickly.

3. NHDC Update

KS advised that with the decision now having been made to purchase the DCO, Office Accommodation will remain on the SCF Agenda as a standing item in order to provide updates to SCF and for discussion of any OA related matters.

KS

KS advised that there has been some significant changes to Local Government Pension Scheme that are due to come into effect in April 2014. An overall verbal update was provided however KS will arrange Staff Communications and links to further information and to attach a link to the SCF minutes.

more detail is set out at <http://www.lgps2014.org> on the LGPS website (lgps.org.uk).

Particularly useful reading is the 'At a Glance' comparison of the new and current schemes and the 'Frequently Asked Questions' page. Please take the time to have a look at these. Further information is also available on the LPFA website (www.yourpension.org.uk).

KS reminded everyone of imminent changes to timesheets with automatic locking. VG commented that the deadline of one weeks grace seems quite tight. KS advised that staff needed to get into habit of recording their hours daily rather than completing a number of sheets at a time.

VG

VG also raised a issue in that that you cannot split home working and office working on the sheets – it has to be one or the other. KS informed that Mark Melluish is managing any changes to the Flexi-time system and suggested Vic ask Mark if it's possible to develop this change.

HR have 2 new members of staff – Vicky Jobling – Learning and Development Officer and Gabriella Hensman – New HR Intern

Becky Webb is due to go on Maternity Leave this month. The rest of staff will all be sharing the workload, KS explained that the best way to contact HR for help is by e-mail to Hrhelph so matters can be picked up and allocated to an appropriate officer without delay.

KS informed everyone that we shall soon be recruiting for Apprenticeships again as we move into the second year of the scheme.

4. Employee Queries

BC raised two queries on behalf of employees:

- Was there any update on the use of smart phones for mobile workers

VG informed they are looking into an app that can be installed on smart phones and will start rolling this out to field workers who currently have their own smart phones.

Also VG informed that Environmental Health are currently testing the use of tablets instead of Laptops as this may be more appropriate moving forward.

- Provision of additional cycle storage

AC advised that Property Services will look into increasing storage space for cycles. However as a temporary measure there is a cycle storage facility at Town Lodge that can be utilised. **AC**

Other issues raised were:

- CM asked if short term contracts can be offered for staff instead of permanent contracts.

KS advised that we have a vacancy control procedure which is used before any job is advertised to see if it is suitable for a permanent role or a short term role. People are usually seeking permanent employment for job security reasons. Temporary Jobs are more difficult to resource, for instance recruiting to cover maternity leave can be much harder that recruiting the same job as a permanent position.

- SG informed that Antonella Di Maria had asked if there could be a discussion on dress code for the office.

KS informed that this had also been raised recently at SMT. A few employees had recently made comments about this. KS explained that the staff code of conduct states it should be a smart/business dress code. It was suggested that it may be staff that are doing a mixture of office and home working being in the office in casual wear. This was discussed and overall it was agreed that staff should change into office wear when they come into the office for meetings etc.

KS

KS said she he would inform senior managers that this had been raised at SCF.

- CC asked if statutory days have been allocated

KS informed that the statutory days had been allocated in January nad added to people leave records. The days are a half day on Christmas Eve and full day on Friday 27th December 2013 with the other half day to be taken at employees choice. KS will send out a message to staff to remind them to book these days and on booking up their annual leave in general.

KS

- VG asked if everyone can have a sift through emails as soon everyone will be allocated with an email allowance.

5. Any Other Business

No further business to discuss