

Audit Committee – 13th December 2007

5. Health, Safety and Welfare – Annual Report

Head of Service: Laurence Willis, Head of Environmental Health & Community Protection

Lead Officer: Tony Richbell, Safety Adviser

Contact Details: tony.richbell@southsomerset.gov.uk or (01935) 462655

Purpose of the Report

In order to keep members informed of health, safety and welfare issues relevant to SSDC activities and undertakings, the Safety Adviser provides an annual report for the Audit Committee.

The report contains an overview of health and safety matters and/or concerns, details of new or recent Health and Safety legislation and comments on other health, safety or welfare matters considered likely to have some impact on Council activities.

This report covers the period 1st January – 30th November 2007.

Recommendation

That members note and comment on the report.

Report

Accidents

DEPT/SECTION	NO. OF ACCIDENTS	DAYS LOST	COMMENTS
Waste & Transport	10 (19)	9 (46)	No data for waste after 01/10/07
Streetscene	8 (21)	9 (16)	Includes 7 days arising from one incident
Offices	21 (25)	1 (7)	None
Horticulture	8	2	None
Octagon Theatre	1 (2)	0 (0)	Minor incidents
Volunteers	4 (1)	N/A	As above
Contractors	1 (0)	N/A	As above
Members of public	3 (1)	N/A	Slips/Trips/Falls
Others	12	0 (0)	Pest officers, Car park inspectors, Cem/Crem.etc.
TOTAL	72 (70)	21 (69)	

NOTE: Figures in brackets are for Jan-Nov 2006

Statistics for 2008 onwards will reflect the transfer of waste and recycling to the Somerset Waste Partnership

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Legislation

Corporate Manslaughter – Comes into force April 2008, the main points have been sent to Management Board and Members via a briefing note.

Construction (Design & Management) Regulations – Came into force April 2007, there are a number of changes that affect SSDC activities and staff from Property & Engineering Services have attended training courses to update their knowledge

Control of Noise at Work Regulations 2005 – Came into force April 2006 but there was a two year transitional period for the entertainment industry, therefore the Regulations will apply to the Octagon Theatre from April 2008.

Legionella

Following the prosecution of Barrow in Furness Council and the subsequent public enquiry, the Safety Adviser took a report to Management Board giving details of the prosecution and enquiry, the list of management failings and remedial action identified by Barrow and HSE. The implications for SSDC were discussed and resulted in an agreement to run health and safety management training sessions for both senior executives and section managers. The courses will run during March 2008.

Radon

The risks arising from exposure to Radon gas are well known in the South West and South Somerset has it's own documented "hot spots". Although information has gone to householders in the past, HSE is keen to ensure employers assess the risks to employees from Radon in the workplace. The Safety Adviser, in conjunction with Property Services, will identify all properties SSDC own or control in order to identify sites at risk and action required.

Safety Panel

Since the 2006 Safety Advisers report, further changes have been made to the Safety Panel. Historically, reports from site representatives were the last item on the agenda and the representatives often had problems with the timings. The meetings are now in two parts with the site safety representatives and the Safety Adviser having a "pre-meeting" before the start of the main meeting in order to discuss site specific issues; this gives them the opportunity to ensure any concerns are given sufficient time for discussion.

Health & Safety Training

In-house health and safety training courses carried out during 2007 include, Managing Contractors, Carrying out Risk Assessments, First Aid, Asbestos Management and Lone Working.

Business Continuity

When one of our buildings is evacuated as a result of an emergency, it is usually assumed that it can be re-occupied fairly soon after. Depending on the problem, this may not always be possible, in fact the whole site may have to be cleared in certain circumstances, The Safety Adviser has asked for feedback from staff to identify what problems they may experience if, having left a building in a hurry, they then need to leave the site. This information will be discussed and procedures put in place to assist staff that may have problems with communication, transport, medication etc.

Operational Risk Assessments

Following a recent Management Board meeting, a reminder has been sent by the Chief Executive to all Heads of Service and Services Managers asking them to review their existing operational risk assessments and produce additional assessments where necessary.

Safety Policy

The following new sections have/will be added to the Council Safety Policy:

Slips/Trips/Falls

Working at Height

Permits to Work

Training

Priorities for 2008

The following items have been identified as priority issues to be addressed during 2008:

Radon: Production of policy, procedures and risk assessments

Business continuity: Emergency evacuation action plan

Stress: Actions arising from latest audit

Background Papers: *Members briefing note – Corporate Manslaughter & Corporate Homicide Act 2007*
