

## EMPLOYEES' CONSULTATIVE FORUM: 24/01/2012

### EMPLOYEES' SIDE REPORT ON: Relating to Health and Safety Policy and Procedures and ongoing Health and Safety Issues.

#### SUMMARY AND DECISION REQUESTED

We require a rapid and full and comprehensive report from Health and Safety Group on issues raised by Unison on the Health and Safety Policy, Audit report and Communications Code of Practice. We also seek a resolution to various matters subjected to a refusal to properly address the issues. Those responsible should be held fully accountable through the Council's internal employment procedures.

#### CHRONOLOGY:

DATE	ACTION	OUTCOME
	HS Policy review and COP Through Health and Safety Manager and Corporate HS Group	On going issue, poor response through various inconclusive meetings
	Academies Director HR	No indication during negotiations that the HS SLA would not be honoured. Representative involvement in health and safety has been ignored. Ongoing issue
	Schools Health and Safety Department and Director No infrastructure arrangements to allow health and safety meetings and poor response to our communications.	On going issue
	Health and Safety Department. Health and Safety Department and Director Lack of effective involvement of the Unions in health and safety investigations. Failure to obtain a Health and safety partnership agreement.	On going issue
	Housing Health and Safety Department and Director. Director C+E. Director Housing  Kenmore Hall asbestos removal No proper evidence or due diligence that shows whether people were put at risk. Refusal to register those possibly affected. An inadequate report that failed to address all the issues.	On going issue

	<p>Bomb scare Procedure  Director C+E and Facilities Management  No effort to resolve the issues or adequately explain. The Unions have been ignored and various ineffective operational changes made without consultation putting people at risk.</p>	<p>Protracted issue no adequate response.  A determined effort by the Director to avoid accountability.</p>
	<p>Two Gas incidents at the Depot site  Director C+E and Facilities Management  Health and Safety Department and Director  No effort to involve Unions in the investigation or provide their investigation reports.  Failure to properly identify or interview key witnesses.</p>	<p>Ongoing issue no adequate response</p>
	<p>Depot toilets  Director C+E and Facilities Management  Health and Safety Department and Director  A correction is required to the claims by facilities management that the work was carried out by a competent contractor.  Further remedial work is necessary.</p>	<p>Protracted issue no adequate response.  Inaccurate information provided.  Outstanding defects remain.</p>
	<p>Civic Centre 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor Refurbishment  Director C+E. Head of Property  Various defects and poor installation were identified. Promises of an investigation were not honoured and union queries were ignored.</p>	<p>Protracted issue no adequate response</p>

## REPORT

Unison submits this report in line with the requirements of Council policy on Health and Safety and the Partnership working policy of the Council.

Due to the actions or inactions by Directors and managers the Branch is left with no alternative but to bring matters to the senior forum.

## Unison ECF Health and Safety Report January 2012

This has been a mixed year with some success but also a failure to address some issues.

We now have all Directorate health and safety groups functioning with well managed and proactive Place Shaping Directorate meetings now being held.

Last year saw the publishing of the Jane Don audit into the management of health and safety. Health and safety Department has moved on significantly introducing on line accident / incident reporting and an audit programme. We are still waiting however to see the results of the trial.

We are not satisfied that issues in the Audit report including management accountability have been addressed in the health and safety policy or the code of practice. The documents do not properly relate to each other or the Audit report and a number of our comments have been ignored. The consultation process has been flawed and since we have given detailed written comments some time ago there is no excuse for the anomalies to remain in the documents. We have made it plain at Corporate Health and Safety Group that this Unison Branch will not legitimise the flawed HS Policy or code of practice.

No Academy school has signed up to continue with the services of the Council's health and safety department (or offer an alternative). As we were not told this during the negotiations we want to know if we were misled and we will take a jaundiced view in any future applications for Academy status. Also no Academy has replied to a formal request to set up a representative health and safety meeting during the three month deadline.

However despite our formal letter request to set up a representative health and safety meeting at each School Unison has not been invited to one health and safety meeting. As this is a legal requirement under health and safety legislation we will increasingly continue to press our case. For representation to be effective organisational changes such as hub groups and a common format are necessary and this planning is not evident. The deadline for the affirmative replies is imminent

We need to clarify what the Council means when it says the Unions can be part of the investigation into accidents or incidents. If a report is written and then amended by negotiations with respective departments before we are informed we cannot be said to be included in the investigations. Our perception is that the culture of secrecy and silo management is still flourishing in the Council. There has also been a failure to obtain agreement to a Partnership Agreement with all unions. The reasons for the failure need to be explained.

Housing Kenmore Hall asbestos removal - it appears there is no proof that the asbestos was removed, transported or disposed of properly. Since there is no due diligence we want all possibly affected people to be registered as at risk. This was an inadequate report that provided no adequate indication or investigation into work practice or safe disposal of ACMs.

### Cashiers

The project to re-site Cashiers into the old post room has not introduced any changes to reduce the damaging noise levels from the coin counting machine as required by the HSE. Despite various interventions by Unison management insist on relying on staff wearing ear defenders all day long. This is not practical, contrary to HSE guidance and putting staff at risk. A proper assessment of the risks in moving cash and coins has not been provided.

Outstanding issues remain with the community and Environments Directorate:

The various changes to the bomb scare procedure still have not been properly explained but it is clear that staff and public were put at risk unnecessarily. The procedures in an evacuation are also flawed as shown by two false alarms and management still do not have competent plans. While management have been denying disclosure they have allowed a flawed and unsafe process to continue. When we approached the police they were unaware of any official advice having been offered to the Council despite contrary indications from Facilities Management.

There have been two gas incidents at the Depot Site and again we have not been included in the investigations or even knowledge of the reports.

Depot toilets - we need a correction to the statement made at ECF by facilities management that the work was of high standard and all carried out by a competent contractor. Also the defective work needs to be rectified.

Civic One Second floor refurbishment Project safety concerns- No reply has been received from the Head of Property. Despite various reminders from us and an assurance that an investigation would take place there has been a refusal to inform the Unions.

We look forward to a more cooperative effort between management and Unions in the New Year.