
Meeting of the Executive Member for Neighbourhood Services and Advisory Panel

21st March 2007

Report of the Director of Neighbourhood Services

York Safer Working Community Project.

Summary

1. To advise Members of the York Safer Working Community Project which took place in the week 22nd – 26th January 2007.

Background

2. The Executive Member and Advisory Panel for Environment and Sustainability on the 11th May 2005 endorsed a signup to a partnership between the Health and Safety Executive and City of York Health and Safety Enforcement Officers based on the principal of making best use of their respective strengths, and applying collective resources in the best way to tackle national, regional and local priorities for Health and Safety. Joint working will reflect the Health and Safety Commission's overall strategy and contribute to relevant local objectives such as those for healthy communities.
3. In progressing this partnership, the HSE and local authorities looked at projects which would make best use of the two enforcing authorities' resources. As a result the concept of a "Safer Working Community" event was introduced. Basically within this concept, a local authority signs up to hold a full week of awareness –raising events backed up by inspection and enforcement, focussing on topics most relevant to the businesses it regulates in that particular area. The authority also encourages the HSE, both to contribute resources and expertise and to ensure its own priorities and those priorities it regulates are included. The aim of such an event is to achieve sustainable improvements in Health and Safety within each chosen community. To this end partnerships are built between HSE and a range of stakeholders who share the same aims and objectives as the enforcing authorities.

The Project

4. The Safer Working Community Project was carried out jointly by Environmental Health Officers and Health and Safety Executive Officers. The project concentrated on the Hotel and Catering Industry where accidents and ill health due to slips, trips and falls, manual handling, contact dermatitis and

violence at work are very common. This sector of the working community provides employment for a large number of employees. Many of the businesses are small to medium enterprises where very often knowledge of Health and Safety Law and responsibility is very low. The risks involved in this industry i.e. slips, trips and falls, manual handling, contact dermatitis and violence at work are the key issues that the Health and Safety Commission wish enforcing authorities to address.

5. By holding a large number of events and covering a diverse number of health and safety topics, a large number of businesses could be targeted. Interestingly many businesses have asked the enforcement agencies to check whether the systems they have in existence are satisfactory and sufficient to comply with the law, which suggests we have been successful in bringing down barriers, and being seen not only as an enforcement authority, but also as one that can offer advice and assistance. Many businesses are making the all – important move towards taking responsibility for their own health and safety.
6. The aims of the week was to have a series of educational events on health and safety backed up by days of inspections.
7. Two weeks prior to the campaign targeted inspections were carried out by environmental health officers. These visits had a two fold purpose.
 - a) To publicise the event
 - b) To establish current compliance with Health and Safety Law

During this period 100 premises were visited by environmental health officers. In the main businesses visited welcomed this type of event. Many visited were found to be lacking in basic Health and Safety Requirements such as risk assessments and accident reporting procedures

8. Premises with poor compliance were encouraged to attend the training events in areas where their compliance was lacking.
9. 200 delegates from a range of businesses attended the opening day of the week in the Guildhall. In addition the rest of the week was well attended with an average of 60 people per day attending the free seminars. There was a particularly good response from the city's catering and food manufacturing industries sector.
10. 25 farmers attended an agriculture event at Nun Monkton which included a health and safety inspection of a farm, highlighting the main causes of injuries and the measures that should be taken to reduce risks on farms
11. During the week there were two days of targeted inspections. This involved 10 inspectors including 6 HSE inspectors, the 2 CYC inspectors, and an additional 2 inspectors from East Riding Council working on flexible warrants. A total of 220 premises were visited during period looking at the key issues

of risk assessments, slips trips and falls, manual handling, working at height, workplace transport and contact dermatitis.

12. Serious failings were found in several premises which resulted in six enforcement notices being served covering problems which ranged from maintenance of forklift trucks to working at height and guarding issues
13. The event was very well publicised in the media and was so successful that HSE have indicated they wish to use it as a model nationally. In the annex to this report is an article featured in the HSE internal newsletter.
14. Six weeks after the week of events, further inspections will be carried out to judge premises compliance/ improvement. If premises are found to still be non compliant after the campaign, enforcement action will be carried out in the form of statutory enforcement notices.
15. In order to ensure that this project is sustainable, it is planned to hold Health and Safety forums every 6months with delegates to keep them informed of developments in Health and Safety. This proposal was welcomed with enthusiasm by delegates attending the events.

Corporate Objectives

16. This project supports the Corporate Objective to “Improve the health and lifestyles of the people who live in York” as its key purpose is to reduce workplace accidents.

Implications

- **Financial:**

17. There are no financial implications associated with this report.

- **Human Resources (HR):**

18. There are no HR implications associated with this report.

- **Equalities**

19. There are no equalities implications associated with this report.

- **Legal:**

20. The Council has a statutory responsibility to ensure Health and Safety of employees working in York and this project combines education and enforcement to fulfil that responsibility.

- **Information Technology (IT)**

21. There are no IT implications associated with this report.

- **Other**

22. There are no other implications to consider.

Recommendations

23. That the Advisory Group advise the Executive Member notes the report.

Reason: To update the Executive Member on the practical implications of partnership working with HSE.

Contact Details

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Report Approved **Date**

28 February 2007

Wards Affected:

All

For further information please contact the author of the report

Background Papers:

Report to Executive Member for Environment and Sustainability dated 11th May 2005 " Health and Safety Executive and City of York Council working together"

Annex:

Article from the HSE Newsletter.