

EAST MIDLANDS REGION

REGIONAL INDUSTRIAL CONSTRUCTION SECTOR COMMITTEE MEETING

Unite Pride Park Office, Derby
Thursday 28 January 2010



Attendees: Robert Baldwin
James Dudill
John Hughes
Steve Syson, Regional Officer

1 **Apologies**

Apologies received from James Wetherill, Paul Roberts, Adrian Axtell and Tom Hardacre.

2 **Minutes of Last Meeting**

None

3 **Matters Arising**

None

4 **Regional Industrial Report**

Steve Syson gave a verbal report on the following issues:

- **NAECI category 1 Projects**

Staythorpe/West Burton under new build – two different clients, RWE and EDF Energy respectively. The two projects have completely different management styles in approaching the mechanical construction section of the builds. EDF Energy has appointed AMEC as the main contractor and AMEC is the main employer on the build. There have been very few industrial relation issues on the West Burton site Staythorpe in complete contrast has had a number of serious industrial relations and safety issues. The Staythorpe site main contractor is ALSTOM who have appointed a large number of contractors to undertake the work with a mix of UK and non-UK labour. This has created a number of language barrier issues and non-UK employers seemingly not to understand the NAECI national agreement. Unite has lodged a number of employment tribunal claims against ALSTOM and other site contractors over issues varying from unlawful deduction to protective awards. There have also been problems due to sub-contractors sub contracting out part of their workloads to employment businesses. This has created serious problems in redundancy selection processes for the run-down of the project. With regard to health and safety there has been serious concerns regarding non-UK labour sections approach to health and safety. Unite have called in the HSE over these issues. The project is behind schedule and is clearly failing in its way forward. Unite hope that after all the issues, lessons have been learned, by the main contractor and the client.

- **Electrical and Plumbing (Domestic Builds)**

The Electrical and plumbing industry under domestic builds are facing a difficult time in the current economic climate with a number of closures and redundancies taking place. WT Parker (Electrical) have seen job cuts at their Grantham branch as have Lee Beesley in Nottingham. FG Skerritt has closed with the loss of 40 Jobs and J Tomlinson has seen wage freezes and job losses.

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5 Delegates Industrial Report

John Hughes – Caledonian

The Company had seen job losses just before Christmas along with short time working. The Company had seen a tightening on finances for Government contract for prison work. The prospects going forward around March were looking better with some potential orders being discussed. The Company were considering some minimum overtime working for key customers where there was a shortfall in production to maintain customer confidence. The Company had advised the Trade Union that there would be no pay rise for the next year. Unite had argued that they refused to accept this and the pay claim currently is on hold until the business turns around when it will be revisited.

Robert Baldwin – Hanson Brick

The Company was just ticking over, as house building was very slow. The Company was laying employees off for a month at a time on a retainer of £250 per week. The pay talks for this year will be in August so hoping for a turnaround before then, though that wasn't looking likely as things stood.

James Dudill Lectec NRL – Staythorpe

James agreed with the Regional Officer that the project was not being managed properly and seemed to stumble from one issue to another. The main concern was regarding Health and Safety of some on the Non UK contractors, as they seemed unable to have an understanding. There had been issues with lifts being dropped, power lines being hit. The safety concerns resulted in a number of un-procedural industrial actions taking place, as it seemed the only way to get the employers to improve.

6 Establish Regional Industrial Strategy (to include General Election Preparation)

Steve advised that the sector had suffered due to not having an officer responsible for construction in the region for the last 3 years and as such the sector was unorganised in some areas, especially with a shortage of site representatives, which needed to be addressed. Where there are reps, there needs to be concentration on 100% membership. One key focus was for reps to get the message out to their members for the retention of the Labour Government at the general election. Bulletins on this would be available to assist the reps with updates on the key seats etc. Robert Baldwin offered to give update reports from his NJC meetings, which would bring more information to the meeting. Steve informed it was the delegates meeting and going forward and the meetings should focus on the key issues with the construction sector in an endeavour to move the sector forward in both profile and numbers.

7 Equality Committee Vacancies.

Noted.

8 Regional Industrial Committee Dates 2010

To be arranged.

9 Any other Business

None