

CAERPHILLY COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CORPORATE SAFETY COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT THE COUNCIL OFFICES, TREDOMEN ON 22ND FEBRUARY 2000 AT 10.00 A.M.

PRESENT:

Councillor P.J. Bevan - Chairman
Councillor A.J. Pritchard - Vice-Chairman

Councillors:

Mrs A. Blackman and H.E. Styles

Together with

R. Gough (Personnel Manager (Advice and Consultancy)), P.Griffiths (Senior Corporate Health and Safety Officer), P. Neale (Health, Safety and Welfare Officer), S. Morgan (Corporate Safety Officer), G. Herne (Corporate Health and Safety Officer), G. Price (Admin Officer (Welfare and Central Support)), T.K. Meredith (Health and Safety Officer (Competition Services)) and Mrs K. Wall (Committee Services Officer).

Safety Representatives

K. Lewis (NAS/UWT), P. Joseph (GMB), J. Reece (UCATT), N. Davies (AEEU), S. Lane (UNISON)

APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence was received from Councillors Mrs. M.E. Hughes, H. Price and D.T. Wiltshire.

CS1 MINUTES

The minutes of the last meeting of the Committee held on 23rd November 1999 were received and noted.

REPORTS OF THE DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Consideration was given to the following reports.

CS2 Risk of Needlestick Injuries

The Committee was informed that U.C.A.T.T. had expressed concern that Building Services employees could come into contact with drugs/hypodermic needles when emptying void properties and face the risk of needlestick injuries. This issue had been raised at a meeting of the Corporate Safety Committee in 1999 and policy/guidance notes had been introduced in respect of AIDS and

HIV, needlestick injuries and infectious diseases. These policies had been forwarded to the U.C.A.T.T. Branch Secretary for information.

It was also reported that the Safety Officer in Competition Services was in discussion with Building Services Management on the introduction of Safe Practices within the Department to aid staff in dealing with these risks.

The Committee noted the report.

CS3 First Aid at Work Training

The Committee considered the report which gave details of the First Aid at Work Training Courses arranged by the Personnel Services Unit from December 1999 to February 2000 and the number of qualified First Aiders in each Directorate was noted.

Following discussion on raising awareness it was agreed that the Head of Personnel would prepare a report on:-

- (i) the provision of basis resuscitation courses for employees;
- (ii) communicating first aid issues to employees, including the induction process.

CS4 Provision of Prescription Safety Glasses

The report outlined the present system of providing prescription safety glasses and included a proposal to standardise this provision. It was noted that at present all prescription safety glasses were provided to employees in the Competition Services Directorate and were issued after a Risk Assessment had been carried out. Employees were then given a free choice of which optician to visit. The present system had proved to be onerous for a number of reasons, including the delay in providing glasses to some employees, different system of issuing invoices between opticians causing administrative problems for the Authority and the large amount of organisation, paper and time taken to administer the system.

As a result of the problems identified above, the Authority had held discussions with a national optical provider which would provide prescription safety glasses at one standard price to all employees.

The Committee considered the proposal and gave its agreement in principle, subject to Officers examining the legal implications of using one provider before the proposal was implemented.

REPORTS OF THE DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

Consideration was given to the following reports.

CS5 The Health and Safety Advisory Service within Caerphilly County Borough Council

The report advised the Committee of the Authority's response to the legal requirements for competent health and safety assistance.

The Committee noted that the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 required employees to ensure, as far as was reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of all employees and

others who may be affected by their actions

This requirement was amplified by the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999, Regulation 7 which required employers to appoint sufficient numbers of competent persons to assist the Council in complying with the requirements and prohibitions imposed or under the relevant statutory provisions.

In order to comply with these obligations, each Directorate employed a full or part time Officer to look after the health, safety and welfare of its employees and the Committee was provided with a list of the nominated Officers in each Directorate. It was also noted that because of the size of the Authority, it was necessary to have the services of Officers to oversee the activities of individuals and to orchestrate the Council's responses to the legal requirements and that the Health, Safety and Welfare Officer met this need in respect of Occupational Health and Welfare and that safety matters were dealt with by the Corporate Safety Unit.

CS6 Noise Surveys

The report outlined the work undertaken by the Corporate Safety Unit in assessing industrial noise. It was noted that the Noise at Work Regulations 1989 required that an employee's exposure to noise was assessed and, if necessary, reduced to a level which would not cause a loss of hearing.

Over the past year over 40 noise surveys had been undertaken in the form of assessment of the noise output of individual pieces of plant and machinery. In most of these cases, remedial action normally included the provision and use of personal protective equipment.

The report also gave details of the action taken when the surveys showed noise levels were below 85 dB(a), between 85 dB(a) and 90 dB(a) and above 90 dB(a).

During discussion, reference was made to the issue of personal protective equipment and to ways of ensuring that it was worn by the workforce.

The Trade Union representatives also expressed their concern at the perceived lack of suitable health and safety training for managers and foremen and it was agreed that letter expressing these concerns be sent to all Heads of Service and Trade Union representatives.

CS7 Health and Safety Improvement Notice

The Committee was informed that an Enforcement Notice had been served on the Authority in respect of the manual handling of children with physical disabilities.

Details of the background to the case resulting in the issue of the notice were outlined in the report and it was noted that the Health and Safety Executive had agreed to extend the notice until 1st March 2000.

CS8 Information for Employees Regulations 1988

The Committee was informed of a change in the content of the health and safety information which an employer must give to workers.

Details of the information required under the original regulations were provided and it was noted that the recent revision of the Regulations required that further information including the names of the persons appointed to assist the employer in matters relating to Health and Safety and the names and locations of trade union or other safety representatives and the groups they represented be provided. It was noted that new posters must be in place by 1st July 2000 and, in line with the Authority's bi-lingual policy, would be printed in both English and Welsh.

The Committee noted the information provided.

CS9 Fire Precautions (Workplace) Regulations 1997

The report outlined details of the legislation relating to fire precautions in the work place. It was noted that a recent revision of the legislation required that a risk assessment was undertaken at all workplaces, irrespective of size, use or number of employees.

To ensure that these assessments were undertaken, a number of employees would be trained in fire risk assessment and the Corporate Safety unit would circulate the necessary information to Directorates and identify funding, possibly on a Joint Corporate/Directorate basis.

The Committee noted the information provided.

CS 10 Standardisation of Personal Protective Equipment

The report outlined a proposal to standardise the personal protective equipment issued to staff. The Committee was informed that the Corporate Safety Unit was working with Procurement Services in an attempt to standardise the quality of the equipment provided at Central Stores.

The Committee noted the information provided.

CS11 Accident Statistics

The Committee was circulated with copies of page 2 of the report which had been inadvertently omitted when the agenda was dispatched.

The report gave details of the numbers and types of industrial accidents which had occurred to staff, school pupils, clients of services provided by the Authority and members of the public and which have been associated with the activities of the Authority during the period 1st April, 1999 - 30th September, 1999.

The Committee noted the report.

CS12 The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999

The Committee received information on the above Regulations which consolidated the provisions of the Amendment Regulations of 1994 relating to new and expectant mothers and extended the Regulations to other health and safety legislation and included new provisions. It was also noted

that the Regulations also prevented employers from employing young persons in specified high risk areas, subject to stated exceptions.

The Committee noted the report.

The meeting closed at 11.40 a.m.