

CAERPHILLY COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CORPORATE SAFETY COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT THE COUNCIL OFFICES, TREDOMEN ON THURSDAY, 8TH NOVEMBER 2001 AT 9.30 A.M.

PRESENT:

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

Councillors:

R. Gough (Personnel Manager - Advice and Consultancy), S. Delahaye (Chief Trading Standards Officer), M. Workman (Commercial Trading Manager), P. Griffiths (Senior Corporate Safety Officer), K. Meredith (Corporate Safety Officer), D. Price (Head of Grounds Maintenance), Mrs E. Thomas (Personnel Manager) and Mrs. K. Wall (Committee Services Officer)

Trade Union Safety Representatives

B. Barrowman, J. Reece, N. Davies, K.A. Bevan, J. Poole, A. Morton, R. Agg

APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor H. Price, P.V. Neale (Health, Safety and Welfare Officer), M. Rees Williams (Client Services Manager), M. Lloyd (Contracts Manager), G. Price (Admin Officer - Welfare and Central Support – Education), M. Payne, Mrs. J. Havard, J. Hogan, L. Horrocks and A. Card.

1. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 7th March 2001 were received and noted.

Matters Arising

(i) Safety Policies for Primary Schools

It was noted that since the last meeting, ten primary schools had received appropriate fire-fighting training for teaching staff.

(ii) Issues Raised by Safety Representatives - School Boiler Houses

It was noted that, at the last meeting, the Committee had requested a report outlining details of the schools within the county borough that used coal fired boiler plant and also details of the isolation methods used.

The Chairman reported that Mr Greg Price (Admin. Officer - Welfare and Central Support - Education) had given his apology for the meeting but had provided copies of a table that gave details of some of the schools using coal fired boilers and identified whether they had automatic and/or electrical isolators.

The information was circulated and considered by the Committee. Members of the Committee expressed their concern that the list was incomplete and did not include details

of all county borough schools. It was therefore agreed that a more detailed report would be submitted to the next meeting.

During consideration of this item, the feasibility of installing wood burning boilers in schools was discussed and it was agreed that a report would be requested for submission to the appropriate Scrutiny Committee.

REPORTS OF THE DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES AND HOUSING

2. The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) Four-Year Programme

The Committee noted the report that provided details of the HSE's four year programme of works in respect of local government.

3. 'In-House' Training

The Committee noted details of the in-house training courses organised by Mr John Rowlands, a Corporate Safety Officer within the Corporate Safety Unit.

4. Review of Health and Safety Policies

The report advised the Committee of the reviews of Health and Safety Policies currently being undertaken by the Corporate Safety Unit.

It was noted that the authority had a Corporate Health and Safety Policy and a number of documents that covered the activities of various Directorates. In addition, specific policies covered individual premises such as schools etc.

Currently, the Corporate Safety Unit was engaged in revising the Corporate and Environmental Services and Housing, Health and Safety Policies. A copy of the Draft Corporate Health and Safety Policy was attached to the report and members of the Committee were invited to forward any comments directly to the Corporate Safety Unit.

It was also noted that the Health and Safety Policies in respect of Refuse and Cleansing and Building Services were being updated with assistance from the Corporate Safety Unit.

5. Big Cheese

The report provided details of the involvement of the Corporate Safety Unit in the above event.

It was reported that the Unit had undertaken a site inspection and risk assessment prior to the event and had been involved in activities including, safety issues during the set up period, firework safety, conducting continuous checks on public safety during the weekend, on site traffic management, accident investigation and responding to queries and complaints from the public and site clearance following the weekend.

A total of seven accidents had been reported and investigated over the weekend period and a small number of complaints, mostly in respect of the fairground had been resolved.

The Committee complimented Officers in the Corporate Safety Unit for the efficient manner in which they had carried out their duties during the event.

6. **Proposed Legislation and Guidance**

The report provided information on health and safety matters, issued by the Health and Safety Commission. Details were provided of the proposed change to the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999, which would require a responsible person to investigate all accidents, dangerous occurrences, and diseases that were required to be notified or reported to the Health and Safety Executive under RIDDOR, within ten days of the event.

It was also noted that new guidance had been issued by the Health and Safety Executive in respect of pressure systems and lifts and in either case employees had been advised that they should ensure the safety of equipment by ensuring its thorough examination and testing by trained and competent personnel.

7. **Matters Raised by Trade Union Safety Representatives**

Consideration was given to the following issues that had been raised by Trade Union representatives.

(a) **Work with Asbestos Products - Nigel Davies/John Reece**

The Trade Union safety representatives referred to occasions where staff working on properties or buildings suspected the presence of asbestos. They felt that in such cases, a suitably qualified surveyor should inspect the building before the operatives commenced work on site.

Mr Griffiths noted the comments made and reported on changes to the legislation governing the management of asbestos in buildings. It was noted that changes had been introduced to the Approved Code of Practice to the Control of Asbestos Regulations 1989 which included the requirement to survey buildings, identify the presence, type and condition of asbestos and the necessity to remove or manage the material. To comply with these requirements, Corporate Management Team had authorised the employment of a suitably qualified person to undertake surveys at Council owned and operated premises.

Reports on surveys, together with advice, would be presented to Management to enable decisions to be made on the removal or management of asbestos. If asbestos was to remain in place, appropriate details would be kept at individual premises and be made available to people working at that building.

The Committee welcomed the appointment of a suitably qualified surveyor to undertake such surveys but also enquired about the position of external contractors working at Council owned premises. It was agreed that this issue would be investigated further.

(b) **Refuse Collection - Mr B. Barrowman**

The Committee was informed that in areas where household refuse had traditionally been collected from rear lanes, it was not always possible for collection vehicles to enter or be driven along some of the narrower rear lanes.

As a result, refuse loaders often moved bins and bags for excessive distances, often on gradients and away from roads.

A number of injuries to loaders had resulted from this practice and it was envisaged that further injuries could occur during the winter period when refuse was carried or drawn along untreated surfaces.

There were also the possibilities that a member of the public could collide with a refuse vehicle using a rear lane or that damage could be caused to rear walls or to the vehicle itself.

The Trade Union representatives had therefore suggested that householders be asked to accept other means of collection i.e. from the front of their properties, or that smaller vehicles be purchased for use in restricted areas.

It was noted that the residents of 150 properties with restricted rear access had been contacted by letter, advised of the problems and had been asked to accept alternative means of refuse collection. In addition, a further 400 households would be contacted in the near future.

(c) **The Temperature of Warm Water at Hand Basins - Mr K. Bevan**

It was noted that the temperature of warm water in washrooms and bathrooms of premises operated by the Council was normally controlled by thermostatic valves. During inspections of schools, day centres and residential homes, Officers from the Corporate Safety Unit checked that valves were fitted and maintained and recommended that this course of action was followed and documented if valves were neither fitted or checked.

8. **Raising the Profile of Health and Safety**

The report outlined measures to be taken to improve the flow of health and safety information to the Chief Executive and Directorates.

It was noted that the meeting of Corporate Management Team held on 11th October had endorsed proposals that Directorate Safety Officers would present health and safety reports to their individual Directorate Management Teams.

In addition, it was proposed to hold quarterly meetings with the Directorate Safety Officers, the Corporate Safety Unit and the Health and Welfare Officer.

Minutes of the Directorate Management Team meetings would be reported both to Corporate Management Team and future meetings of the Corporate Safety Committee.

9. **Vocational Training**

Details were provided of training courses undertaken by staff from the Corporate Safety Unit.

It was noted that during the academic year 2000-2001, three members of staff had attended courses. Keith Meredith and John Rowlands had successfully completed the Certificate in Occupational Health and Safety and Steve Morgan had completed Part 1 of the NEBOSH Diploma and was currently studying for Part 2.

Committee members expressed their congratulations to the members of staff Involved.

10. **Audiometric Testing**

The report provided details of work undertaken by the Corporate Safety Unit to check the hearing of employees working in noisy environments.

It was noted that an Officer from the Unit undertook surveys of activities that generated high noise levels and recommended methods of control. In addition, a programme of audiometric testing for employees who might be affected by noise at work was currently being carried out and would be repeated at three yearly intervals.

Where test results indicated a hearing deficiency, or where a comparison of results indicated a loss of hearing since the last test, individuals would be referred to their General Practitioners and the issues of remedial action and re-deployment would be considered.

During discussion, reference was made to the need to ensure the availability of protective equipment in some service areas and the need for Foremen to enforce its use.

Mr White (Refuse and Cleansing Officer) reported that in the Refuse and Cleansing Section, appropriate equipment was made readily available and records of its use were maintained. Risk assessments were also regularly undertaken to identify the need for protective equipment.

11. **Management of Asbestos**

The report provided information on the steps taken to comply with changes in the legislation governing the management of asbestos in buildings.

The Committee noted the information provided.

12. **The Use of Mobile Phones By Drivers**

The report provided details of advice to be provided to Directors on the use of mobile phones in Council vehicles.

Research undertaken jointly by ROSPA and Aston University had concluded that it was impossible to use a mobile phone when driving, without being significantly distracted and increasing the risk of an accident.

Information issued by the Department of Employment, Transport and the Regions supported the ROSPA report. Details of the Highway Code, Regulation 104 of the Road Vehicles (Construction and Use) Regulations 1986 and Section 2 of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 were also outlined in the report.

The Committee agreed that Directors should be advised that:-

- Mobile phones issued to drivers should have a messaging facility
- Drivers should switch off mobile phones before starting a journey
- Drivers should check messages and make any necessary calls at the end of the journey, when the vehicle is stationary
- The drivers of vehicles fitted with two-way radios should not answer calls while their vehicles are in motion, but should wait until their vehicles are stationary before responding.

During consideration of this item, a Trade Union representative made reference to incidents where staff had used their personal mobile phones for Council business.

It was reported that staff employed in Cleansing and Refuse and Grounds Maintenance were issued with Council owned mobile phones and were not asked to use their own phones.

Mrs Elaine Thomas (Personnel Manager) explained that since the closure of Bedwas Depot, communication problems had been experienced. However, she reported that this issue was being addressed and she stressed that there was no obligation placed on staff to use their own personal mobile phones.

13. **Daily Vehicle Checks**

At a previous meeting of the Committee, information on the length of time allowed for drivers to check their vehicles had been requested.

The current situation was outlined and the following information was noted:-

- In Grounds Maintenance six contractual drivers were allowed half an hour per day at overtime rates. The remaining drivers carried out ten minute checks during working hours
- Neither Social Services nor Highways had a formal arrangement of daily maintenance. However, in both cases, drivers carried out checks during their normal working day
- Nine drivers employed by Cleansing were paid half an hour per day as contractual overtime. The remainder undertook checks during the day
- Catering staff checked their vehicles during working hours being allowed on average, ten to fifteen minutes to do so
- The drivers of Building Services vehicles were allowed six minutes daily

The Committee considered the current position and felt that a corporate approach needed to be adopted. It was therefore recommended that the matter be referred to Corporate Management Team for further consideration.

14. **Managers Handbook**

The Committee noted that the Corporate Safety Unit was in the process of preparing a handbook for Managers that would contain policies, procedures and other guidance on health and safety matters.

15. **Enforcement Notices**

The report provided details of two enforcement notices served on the Council by the Health and Safety Executive.

It was reported that an Officer from the Health and Safety Executive had visited a small Council run construction site and following this visit had served the Council with two enforcement notices.

One prohibited any further work at the site until adequate welfare facilities had been provided and the other required the provision of suitable and sufficient washing facilities, including hot/cold-running water, within 28 days.

At the time of the HSE's visit, an outside contractor, working near the Council site had a demountable welfare unit and arrangements were made for the workers from both sites to share the accommodation, obviating both notices and limiting the stoppage of work to one day.

16. **I.O.S.H. Supreme Award**

The Committee was informed that a teacher within the county borough had highlighted a shortfall in available training for teaching staff in respect of casting and forging of metals, necessary to fulfil the terms of the National Curriculum for craft, design and technology.

The Risk Management Section had consequently commissioned an instructional DVD on these subjects and it had been submitted to the Institute of Occupational Safety and Health for consideration for one of its annual awards.

At the Institute's Conference, held in September, the Chairman of Council was presented with the I.O.S.H Supreme Award, sponsored by Zurich Municipal.

17. **Accident Statistics**

The report provided details of the numbers and types of industrial accidents that had occurred to staff, school pupils, clients of services provided by the authority and members of the public and which had been associated with the activities of the authority during the period 1st January 2001 - 1st July 2001.

Whilst discussing the report, a Councillor referred to a flooding incident in Ty Isaf Road, Risca that had occurred earlier in the year. He reported that he had met Council workmen on site and had noticed that they were using a wheelbarrow that was in a very poor state of repair. He enquired whether such equipment was regularly inspected and maintained.

The Trade Union representatives also raised the issue of the use of potentially dangerous equipment.

Following further discussion, it was agreed that a report outlining the procedure for the inspection of equipment and the process of logging damaged or dangerous equipment would be presented to the next meeting.

REPORTS OF THE DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE

18. **Corporate Training in Resuscitation (CPR)**

The Committee welcomed the report that provided details of progress made in setting up a corporate training programme in cardio pulmonary resuscitation (CPR).

19. **Health and Safety Executive (Wales) Annual Report**

The report outlined details of notes taken at an address given by Mr Terry Rose, Director HSE (Wales) and South West Region.

20. **Corporate Guidance On the Control, Prevention of Infectious Diseases and Arrangement Guidelines on Immunisation**

The report outlined details of the Guidance for the Control and Prevention of Infectious Diseases and Guidelines on Immunisation. It was noted that the guidance was intended to assist managers in carrying out a risk assessment for those employees who were considered at risk to infectious diseases and to provide information on the corporate arrangements that should be made if employees required immunisation.

The Committee was invited to forward any further comments to Mr Gough (Personnel Manager - Advice and Consultancy).

21. **First Aid At Work Training**

The Committee noted details of first aid training courses held during the period January 2001 - August 2001.

22. **Guidance for Managers on Lone Workers**

Information was provided in respect of a guidance book produced to assist Managers in providing a safe system of work for employees who may be exposed to risks while working alone.

23. **Date of Next Meeting**

It was agreed that the next meeting would be held on Thursday, 7th February 2001 at 9.30 a.m.