

CAERPHILLY COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CORPORATE SAFETY COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT THE COUNCIL OFFICES, TREDOMEN ON MONDAY, 23RD JANUARY 2003 AT 10.00 A.M.

PRESENT:

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

Councillors:

H.E. Styles and D.T. Wiltshire

Together with:

R. Gough (Personnel Manager - Advice and Consultancy), P. Neale (Health, Safety and Welfare Officer), M. Workman (Commercial Services Manager), P. Griffiths (Senior Corporate Safety Officer), D. Price (Principal Parks and Open Spaces Officer), W. Griffiths (Senior Insurance Officer), G. Price (Admin Officer – Welfare and Central Support - Education and Leisure), Ms D. Llewellyn (Health, Safety and Back Care Adviser - Social Services), Ms E. Thomas (Personnel Manager), M. Miller (Cleansing Foreman) and Mrs. K. Wall (Committee Services Officer)

Trade Union Safety Representatives

B. Barrowman, J. Reece, A. Jones, N. Short, A. Morton, R. Agg, M. Payne, L. Horrocks and D. Williams

APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors P.C.W. Bailie, Mrs M.E. Hughes and H. Price, B. Godsell (AEEU), Ms E. Davies (UNISON) and P. Griffiths (Transport Manager), T. White (Refuse and Cleansing Officer) and D. Griffiths (Insurance and Risk Manager).

1. MINUTES

The minutes of the last meeting of the Committee held on 30th September 2002 were received and noted.

2. MATTERS ARISING

(a) Fire Safety Arrangements (minute no 3, page 2)

A Member referred to recent structural changes that had taken place at the offices at Tredomen and Pontllanfraith and asked whether amended Fire Certificates had been issued. Following discussion, it was agreed that a report outlining the current Fire Certificate requirements would be submitted to the next meeting.

A query regarding disabled access at the Pontllanfraith Offices was also raised and Mr Gough (Personnel Manager - Advice and Consultancy) agreed to raise the issue with the Chairman of the Disabilities Group.

(b) **Health and Safety Seminar for Small Contractors (minute no 9, page 3)**

At the last meeting, it had been agreed that the suggestion to require small contractors to attend health and safety seminars etc before being admitted to the Select Tender List should be referred to the Select Tender Working Group for further consideration.

A response from the Working Group had not yet been received and it was therefore agreed that an update report should be submitted to the next meeting.

REPORTS OF THE DIRECTOR OF THE ENVIRONMENT

3. Exposure to Asbestos

At the last meeting, a number of Trade Union representatives had expressed concern that –

- Staff may have been exposed to asbestos during the course of their duties
- There was a lack of asbestos awareness training available for staff

In view of the concerns expressed, a meeting of Safety Representatives and appropriate Officers had been convened in November 2002 to discuss the issues in more detail.

At that meeting, consideration had been given to the requirements of the revision of the Control of Asbestos Regulations 1987, which came into force on 21st November 2002 and the current level of funding that had been allocated to meet these requirements.

The meeting had expressed its grave concerns regarding the level of financial resources and manpower allocated to undertake the necessary asbestos surveys to meet the requirement of the Regulations.

The question of the under utilisation of the Council's specialist asbestos team had also been raised, although the meeting had acknowledged that there would be a resultant cost if this team were to be used to undertake property surveys.

The Committee was also informed that Officers from the Corporate Safety Unit were shortly to meet with senior managers to voice the concerns of the workforce and to investigate ways in which the necessary surveys could be expedited to achieve compliance with the target dates contained within the Regulations.

The Committee considered the above update and members felt that the issues raised were of sufficient importance to merit convening a special meeting of the Committee to discuss them in more detail.

During discussion, a Trade Union representative referred to literature produced by the GMB in respect of the Asbestos Regulations and agreed that he would make this available if required.

It was therefore agreed that:-

- (i) a special meeting of the Committee be arranged in mid/late February to consider a report on the Council's progress in meeting the targets in the Control of Asbestos Regulations;
- (ii) the Chief Executive, Deputy Chief Executive and appropriate Directors be invited to attend this meeting;
- (iii) a guest speaker be invited to address the meeting on the subject of asbestos.

4. **River of Light Procession**

The Committee noted the report that provided details of the measures taken to ensure the health and safety of participants at the River of Light Procession held in December.

5. **Health and Safety Poster Campaign**

It was noted that as a result of the protracted industrial action by the Fire Brigade Union, the Corporate Safety Unit had altered its proposed poster campaign and had produced and distributed posters highlighting fire safety instead of posters in respect of slips and trips.

The Committee noted and supported this alteration.

6. **Management of Lone Workers Seminar**

The Committee noted the report that provided details of the four one-day seminars, facilitated by the Corporate Safety Unit for managers and supervisors of lone workers.

7. **Service Area Working Groups**

The Committee noted the report that provided details of the work undertaken by the Corporate Safety Committee in improving health and safety standards in the former Competition Services working areas.

8. **New Legislation**

The report provided an update on the effect of the Health and Safety (Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations. It was noted that the regulations had amended a number of existing health and safety enactments and the report provided further information in respect of the following areas:-

- First Aid Regulations 1981
- Manual Handling Operations Regulations 1992
- Personal Protective Equipment Regulations 1992
- Workplace (Health Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992
- Provision of Work Equipment Regulations 1998

Reference was made to the First Aid Regulations 1981 and the Committee noted that the Regulations required first aid rooms to be accessible to stretchers and other equipment necessary to convey patients to and from the rooms. The difficulty this requirement posed to premises such as the Tredomen and Ystrad Fawr Offices was noted.

During discussion, a trade union representative also enquired about the number of trained first aiders within the authority and it was agreed that details would be sent to him.

9. Accident Statistics

Consideration was given to the report that provided details of the numbers and types of industrial accidents that had occurred to Council employees during the period 1 April to 30 September 2002.

During discussion, reference was made to the Appendix that showed the April – June 2002 quarterly statistics for Social Services and particular attention was drawn to the category that recorded incidents where staff had been ‘physically assaulted by another person’. Concern was expressed that during this quarter there had been 54 incidents within this category.

Ms Llewellyn (Health, Safety and Back Care Adviser – Social Services) explained that this category recorded both physical and verbal assaults and it was agreed that in future, it would be helpful for the Committee to receive a breakdown highlighting the numbers of both types of assaults.

During discussion, reference was also made to the accident statistics in respect of Technical Services and in particular to an incident where a countryside warden had sustained an eye injury even though he had been wearing a visor. The Committee enquired about the types of personal protective equipment issued to operatives and it was agreed that this information would be provided at the next meeting.

REPORTS OF THE DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE

10. Display Screen Equipment Training for Elected Members

At the last meeting of the Committee, the question of appropriate training for elected members who used personal computers and laptop computers had been discussed. It was noted that the Health and Safety (Display Screen Equipment) Regulations 1992 applied to employees and self employed persons only. In addition, in order to be classed as a ‘user’, under the Health and Safety Executive classification, employees had to meet a seven part criteria and thus elected members fell outside the scope of the regulations.

However, it was accepted that the authority had a moral duty and responsibility to both employees and elected members and therefore the forty five councillors currently in receipt of either a personal computer or a laptop computer had been sent the following health and safety literature –

- HSE booklet entitled ‘Working with VDUs’
- Display screen awareness notes
- Working safely with DSW
- Laptop Computers - A User’s Guide

Members had also been invited to attend a short briefing session on the health and safety risks associated with the use of display screen equipment. To date, only three requests for training had been received and it was therefore agreed that Members would be invited to take part in the ongoing staff training sessions.

Elected Members serving on the Committee thanked the Health, Safety and Welfare Officer from providing them with the health and safety literature mentioned above.

11. European Week for Health and Safety

The Committee noted the report that provided details of the half-day stress management seminar held in October as part of the European Week for Health and Safety.

12. **New HSE Guidance - 'New and Expectant Mothers'**

The Committee noted the report that provided details of new guidance issued by the Health and Safety Executive entitled 'New and Expectant Mothers – A Guide for Employers'.

13. **Fire Safety Training - Residential Homes**

A Member referred to recent rota visits he had made to some of the authority's residential homes and he asked whether staff had received appropriate fire safety training and whether the homes were required to maintain log books to record details of annual checks undertaken in respect of fire extinguishers, smoke alarms etc.

Officers confirmed that there was a requirement for residential homes to maintain updated log books and it was agreed that the managers of homes within the county borough should be reminded of this requirement.

Ms Llewellyn also agreed to discuss the issue of appropriate fire safety training with the Social Services Directorate's Training Manager.

14. **Schedule of Future Meetings**

The Committee agreed the following schedule of meetings:-

Thursday, 24th April 2003 at 10.00 a.m.
Thursday, 10th July 2003 at 10.00 a.m.
Thursday, 23rd October 2003 at 10.00 a.m.
Thursday, 22nd January 2004 at 10.00 a.m.

The meeting closed at 11.45 a.m.