

CAERPHILLY COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CORPORATE SAFETY COMMITTEE

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT THE COUNCIL OFFICES TREDOMEN
ON THURSDAY, 24TH APRIL 2003 AT 10AM**

PRESENT:

Councillor P J Bevan - Chairman

Councillors:

H E Styles and D T Wiltshire

Together with:

L. Williams (Catering and Cleaning Services), D.K. Llewellyn (Social Services), M.D. Workman (Directorate of the Environment), P. Griffiths (Directorate of the Environment), P. Neale (Chief Executives/Personnel), E. Thomas (Chief Executives/Personnel), R. Gough (Chief Executives/Personnel), G. George (Committee Services Manager)

Trade Union Representatives:

A. Jones, A.J. Reece, D.A. Williams, A. Morton, B.Barrowman

APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Mrs M.E. Hughes and A.J. Pritchard Mr M. Payne (GMB), N. Short, T. White and Hazel Hortop.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made at the meeting.

MINUTES

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 23rd January 2003 and the Special meeting held on 24th February 2003 be approved as a correct records and signed by the Chairman.

Matters arising

Fire Safety Arrangements – min 2(a)

The issue relating to disabled access to the Council Offices had been resolved.

Accident Statistics – min 9

Details were available and would be circulated to all members of the committee.

Seminar - issues associated with managing asbestos (Special meeting on 24th February 2003)

The committee wished to place on record its appreciation to all involved in arranging and presenting

this seminar. It was particularly welcomed by the trade unions. Some disquiet was expressed at the early departure from the meeting of senior officers who it was hoped were aware of the seriousness of situation.

PHYSICAL AGENTS (NOISE) DIRECTIVE

The report informed members, management and trade union safety representatives of a proposed change in legislation governing noise at work.

The imminent adoption of the Physical Agents (Noise) Directive, which will further limit noise in the workplace is expected. The Directive reduces permissible noise levels to which employees can be exposed and generally tightens up the responsibilities of employers.

Once adopted by the European Parliament, the contents must be transposed into UK legislation within three years although a transitional period of two years has been agreed for the music and entertainment industries.

The Corporate Safety Unit will inform appropriate managers of the proposed changes and recommend courses of action necessary to ensure compliance with the reduced noise limits. Managers will also be reminded of the obligation to ensure that vibration, emitted by machinery, is below the lower limit of 2.8 m/sec over 8 hours.

ADVICE ISSUED BY THE HEALTH AND SAFETY EXECUTIVE

The report informed members, management and trade union safety representatives of new advice on minimising back problems in drivers and machine operators. Regular drivers of industrial vehicles, including tractors and other agricultural machinery, fork lift trucks, lorries and buses can be at risk of developing debilitating back pain, including that arising from "whole body vibration".

Driving off road too fast, over rough routes and badly paved surfaces in vehicles with poor suspension was seen as being contributory factors to back problems.

Employers were recommended to employ a risk assessment approach to tackle the problem and should also take practical measures to reduce exposure.

FIRE CERTIFICATES

The report informed members, management and trade union safety representatives of the requirement for some buildings to have Fire Certificates under the terms of the Fire Precautions Act, 1971.

The Fire Precautions Act 1971, which is enforced by the Fire Authority, empowers the Secretary of State to designate certain premises as requiring Fire Certificates. Any changes to the fabric of the building must be communicated to, and approved by, the Fire Authority, which body will amend the plan.

A proposed change in legislation, likely to come into effect in a year, is expected to lessen the importance of the Fire Certificate. In future, all buildings where persons are employed, or to which the public have access, will have to be risk assessed.

HEALTH AND SAFETY SEMINARS FOR SMALL CONTRACTORS

At the request of the Chairman of the Corporate Safety Committee, the suggestion that small contractors attend Health and Safety Seminars, prior to admission to the Select Tender List, was referred to the Select Tender Working Group for consideration.

The Group agreed with the principle of raising the awareness of health and safety among small

contractors however the means of enforcing attendance at such Seminars did not lie with that body. The number of requests for inclusion on the Select Tender List is not constant. Consequently contractors could be unable to be admitted to the list until a suitable number of companies could be assembled, to arrange a viable Seminar.

It was agreed that small contractors be supplied with health and safety information prior to commencing work and that a further seminar be arranged when sufficient numbers make the exercise viable.

THE MANAGEMENT OF ASBESTOS

Following the Special Meeting of the Corporate Safety Committee on 24th February 2003, progress has been made in complying with the Local authority's statutory obligations under the Control of Asbestos at Work Regulations 2003. An Officer of the Corporate Safety Unit met with Trade Union Safety Representatives to present the draft Asbestos Policy Document.

This draft Policy was circulated to all members of the committee and comments were sought. The trade union representatives had asked two of their members to examine the draft in detail. Their response was very positive and they concluded that the document was very helpful.

Members noted the contents of the Draft Asbestos Policy, offered no comments and congratulated all involved in its compilation.

ACCIDENT STATISTICS

The report informed members of the committee of the numbers and types of industrial accidents which have occurred to staff of Caerphilly County Borough Council during the period 1st October 2002 to 31st December 2002.

The incident analysis form splits the type of accidents into three categories:

- Nature of injury
- Part of the body injured
- Accident type

A summary of the accident statistics is shown graphically under the council's directorates. In response to a question, it was agreed that more detail be provided where appropriate on some reportable accidents.

NEW LAW ON DISPLAY SCREEN EQUIPMENT

The report gave details of a revised guidance publication on Display Screen Equipment.

In a bid to tackle the problem, the Health and Safety Executive has recently published revised guidance to help employers ensure the health and safety of display screen equipment (DSE) users. The updated guidance also provides employers with information on preventing DSE users from suffering discomfort or headaches as a result of eyestrain, as well as work related fatigue and stress.

The booklet has also been expanded to include new guidance on:-

- (i) people operating CCTV;
- (ii) protecting people who work from home;
- (iii) a revised checklist to help VDU users assess whether their workstation is set up correctly, and gives them advice on how to do it.

FIRST AID AT WORK TRAINING

In order that the Authority complies with the Health and Safety (First Aid) Regulations employees are required to attend a four day HSE Approved Course prior to them carrying out first aid duties.

First Aid Certificates are issued for a period of 3 years; prior to their expiry date first aiders must attend a two-day HSE approved refresher-training course. The Health and Safety and Welfare Officer from September 2002 to April 2003 have arranged first aid courses.

CHANGES TO FIRE SAFETY LEGISLATION

A Consultative Document issued by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) was issued in November 2003.

There are plans to reform the UK's existing fire safety legislation by creating a single fire safety regime, which will aim to simplify fire safety law in England and Wales by consolidating over 60 sets of regulations into a single regulatory order.

However, under the Government's proposals, the current system of fire certificates would be abolished and replaced with a single fire safety regime based on risk assessments. The new regime would place a legal duty on the person responsible for the workplace, such as the employer or owner to carry out a risk assessment of the fire hazards present at work. In addition, employers would have specific fire safety duties; the proposed changes to the law will be implemented in England and Wales from Spring 2004.

FIRE CERTIFICATES - CORPORATE OFFICES

At the last Corporate Safety Committee held on 23rd January 2003 it was requested that a report outlining the requirements of a Fire Certificate applicable to corporate offices be submitted.

The report therefore looked at:-

- (a) the current position with regards to buildings which require a Fire Certificate; and
- (b) the proposed changes to fire safety legislation.

At present there are two major pieces of specific fire safety legislation. The Fire Precautions Act 1971 and the Fire Precautions (Workplace) Regulations 1997, as amended.

A consultative document plans to reform the UK's existing fire safety legislation by creating a single fire safety regime, which will aim to simplify fire safety law in England and Wales by consolidating over 60 sets of regulations into a single regulatory order. According to the Government, the proposed changes to the law will be implemented in England and Wales from Spring 2004.

All corporate offices hold Fire Certificates, and these premises are inspected by the Directorate Safety Officers on a regular basis. Also the Fire Authority inspects every office that has a Fire Certificate annually. All main offices are required to have a Fire Certificate and risk assessments under the 1997 regulations have been undertaken.

[GUIDANCE ON STRESS AND RISK ASSESSMENT](#)

The report informed the committee of the Guidance on Stress Management and Risk Assessment that is proposed to be issued. This document has been produced to assist Managers in carrying out risk assessments in order to reduce stress in the workplace.

Over the past four years the Authority has introduced various advice and guidance to employees with regards to 'Stress'.

The Authority, during the European Week of Safety (October 2002), held a successful Seminar for Managers.

The guidance has been forwarded to Corporate and Directorate Safety Officers together with copies going to Trade Unions for consultation.

MATTERS OF INFORMATION

Corporate Health Standards

It was reported that the National Assessor from the Wales Assembly Government had awarded the county borough a Silver Award for its Corporate Health Strategy. A formal report would be issued in due course that would identify issues some of which may be brought to the attention of this committee. The committee asked to place on record its appreciation to all involved in achieving this award.

Personnel Best Value Review

During the review the status of the Health and Safety function would be examined. A small officer working party had been set up to look at the way health and safety issues were administered in the county borough. They would prepare a draft document that would be circulated to all interested parties for consultation.

The meeting closed at 11.12 p.m.

Approved as a correct record at the meeting on 10th July 2003

Chairman