

CORPORATE SAFETY COMMITTEE – 10TH JULY 2003

SUBJECT: THE SAFE MANAGEMENT OF ASBESTOS

REPORT BY: DIRECTOR OF THE ENVIRONMENT

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to inform Members, Management and Trade Union Safety Representatives of the progress to ensure that asbestos, contained in workplaces owned and occupied by the Council, is managed safely.

2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 The surveys of all 80 primary schools, which started in October of last year, have been completed.
- 2.2 Survey reports are being produced and delivered to schools. An officer of the Corporate Safety Unit visits each premises and explains the content of the report to the Head-teacher. A copy of the Council's Policy on Asbestos in Buildings is left at each school. Explanatory letters, i.e. emphasising the main points contained in the reports, are to be sent to the Head teachers a reminder of their responsibilities to manage asbestos safely and the means of doing so.
- 2.3 Fifty three schools have been visited to date and arrangements made for a further 12 visits. The remaining premises are to be visited following receipt of copies of the survey reports. These visits will be undertaken before the summer break.
- 2.4 All high risk asbestos, highlighted in the reports, has been, or is being, removed.
- 2.5 The survey reports, received to date, indicate a lower than expected incidence of asbestos in primary schools.
- 2.6 The focus has now switched to Comprehensive Schools and Leisure Centres. The surveys are being carried out by a different contractor who has completed 20 of the 27 surveys. It is anticipated that this work will be completed by the beginning of July. Six separate areas containing "Category A" asbestos have been identified. This has been, or is, being dealt with.
- 2.7 Major building works are expected to be carried out at some schools during the Summer holiday. To prevent accidental exposure to asbestos at that time, it is essential that visits to schools, where work is to take place, are made before the end of term and the appropriate advice given.
- 2.8 Some of the asbestos discovered during surveys is considered sufficiently safe to remain in place. In these areas, the condition of the asbestos must be inspected and monitored to ensure that it has not deteriorated. The Property Division is currently checking that the correct maintenance frequency is being specified prior to arranging a monitoring regime.
- 2.9 A list of all remaining buildings to be surveyed, which includes commercial units owned by this authority, is to be collated so that surveys of the premises can begin at the beginning of August.

- 2.10 Although surveys of council houses is not currently legally required, a working party has been set up in the Public Housing Sector. It is envisaged that the current data base will be used to store survey information.
- 2.11 The training sessions for building managers, held earlier this year, are to be repeated in the Autumn.
- 2.12 Courses for officers, likely to come into contact with asbestos during their normal work, are to be held during the week commencing 23rd June. A total of 55 officers will receive training.
- 2.13 The Building Maintenance is investigating an Asbestos Awareness Course suitable for the workforce.

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