

CORPORATE SAFETY COMMITTEE – 22ND JANUARY 2004

SUBJECT: ACTION AND ENQUIRIES BY THE ENFORCEMENT AUTHORITIES

REPORT BY: DIRECTOR OF THE ENVIRONMENT

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to inform Members, Management and Trade Union Safety Representatives of recent incidents, which have interested the Health and Safety Executive and the Fire Authority

2. ENFORCEMENT ACTION BY THE HEALTH AND SAFETY EXECUTIVE

- 2.1 On five separate occasions last year, contractors were suspected of disturbing asbestos while working in Council buildings. In four of the cases, the discovery was made during visits to explain the asbestos survey report to the managers of buildings.
- 2.2 The possible risk to health, arising out of the disturbance of asbestos, is reportable as a specified dangerous occurrence under the terms of RIDDOR; consequently a report on each incident was submitted to the HSE.
- 2.3 This course of action resulted in the Enforcement Authority carrying out an extensive investigation and culminated in the Chief Executive being informed that HSE were considering legal proceedings, in the case of one of the incidents.

3. ENFORCEMENT ACTION BY THE FIRE AUTHORITY

- 3.1 A forthcoming change in legislation, enforced by the Fire Authority, will result in a requirement for every workplace to be covered by a fire risk assessment.
- 3.2 Recent enforcement activity by the Fire Authority has resulted in the inspection of a number of Council premises and the service of seven enforcement notices. Although the majority of the items, contained in the notices, relate to relatively minor omissions, in every case the absence of appropriate risk assessments has been noted.
- 3.3 Officers of the Building Control Section, who have been trained in risk assessment by the Fire Authority, are currently carrying out assessments to satisfy the terms of the notices before starting to actively assess all workplaces run by the Authority.
- 3.4 Officers of the Corporate Safety Unit and Building Control recently met the Divisional Fire Officer to discuss the Council's response to the change in legalisation.
- 3.5 It was agreed that the Senior Corporate Safety Officer would accompany Fire Safety Officers when they undertake inspections in Council premises. By doing this, it will be possible for liaison with the Building Managers and senior management of a service or directorate to take place and negate the need to serve a notice.
- 3.6 It was also agreed that, when a notice is served, the Senior Corporate Safety Officer will co-ordinate the Council's response.

4. OTHER INCIDENTS

- An incident resulting, in the elderly occupant of a house, which is the subject of a Group Repair Scheme, being injured, when he fell over a trestle left by a contractor, was reported to the HSE.
- The HSE have requested:
 - a) a copy of the Fire Officer's report into the fire at Trinity Fields School and
 - b) Permission to furnish the Police Authority with the report into an incident involving a disabled person, who was injured whilst being transported to a Day Centre
- The HSE are to visit one of the depots in order to investigate a collision between a vehicle and a Council employee.
- Following a fire at commercial premises, which resulted in temporary health problems for two Council employees cleaning up the affected area, the HSE requested information in respect of the incident.

5. The Committee are asked to note the contents of this report.

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