



## **CORPORATE HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMITTEE**

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT THE COUNCIL OFFICES, TREDOMEN  
ON WEDNESDAY, 13TH OCTOBER 2004 AT 10.00 A.M.**

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PRESENT:

Councillor D.T. Wiltshire - Vice Chairman presiding

Councillors:

B.A. Barker, P.J. Bevan, G.R. Price and A.J. Pritchard

Together with:

S. Delahaye (Chief Trading Standards Officer), M. Workman (Commercial Services Manager), Mrs. E. Townsend (Corporate Health and Safety Manager), Ms. A. Wilcox (Senior Health and Safety Officer), P. James (Health and Safety Officer), T. Phillips (Health and Safety Officer), P. Griffiths (Senior Health and Safety Officer – Directorate of the Environment), P.V. Neale (Senior Health and Safety Officer – Chief Executive's), K. Meredith (Health and Safety Officer – Chief Executive's), Ms. D. Llewellyn (Senior Health and Safety Officer – Social Services), Ms. D. Jones (Senior Health and Safety Officer – Education and Leisure), G. Price (Health and Safety Officer – Education and Leisure), L. Williams (Contracts Manager (East)), T. White (Recycling Officer), Mrs. H. Hortop (Occupational Health Nurse), Ms. D. Stamp (Senior Risk and Insurance Officer) and Mrs. K. Wall (Committee Services Officer).

### **Trade Union Representatives**

B. Barrowman, N. Short, A. Jones and L. Horrocks

### **APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors M.J. Prew and L.R. Rees and R. Gough (Personnel Manager – Standards and Development).

### **1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest made during the course of the meeting.

### **2. MINUTES**

RESOLVED that the following minutes be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

Minutes of the last meeting of the Corporate Health and Safety Committee held on 14th July 2004.

### **Matter Arising – Management of Asbestos (Minute no 5, page 2)**

The Committee was informed that the Asbestos Policy for the authority had now been produced and copies were made available at the meeting.

## **REPORTS OF THE DIRECTOR OF THE ENVIRONMENT**

### **3. New Health and Safety Arrangements**

Mrs. Townsend, the newly appointed Health and Safety Manager presented her report that advised the Committee of the latest position regarding the restructuring of health and safety across the authority.

It was noted that each Directorate now had a Senior Health and Safety Officer and Health and Safety Officer who were responsible for providing advice and support and implementing corporate policies and plans into Directorate specific guidance, as well as ensuring compliance with the arrangements.

The Corporate Health and Safety Unit, consisting of a Health and Safety Manager, Senior Health and Safety Officer and two Health and Safety Officers would be responsible for developing policies, the Corporate Health and Safety Strategy and the Corporate Action Plan and would also undertake an auditing role, with the focus of ensuring a consistent approach to health and safety throughout the authority.

It was also noted that to support the new arrangements, a new monthly Health and Safety professionals meeting would be held providing an opportunity for all matters relating to health and safety to be discussed and to facilitate sharing of best practice across Directorates.

The Committee noted the report and welcomed the restructuring, acknowledging that it demonstrated the authority's commitment to revitalising health and safety and the desire to become exemplars of health and safety performance.

### **4. Accident Statistics**

The Committee noted the report that provided information in respect of the numbers and types of industrial accidents that had occurred to staff of the authority during the period 1<sup>st</sup> April to 30th June 2004.

### **5. Health and Safety Annual Report**

The Committee was informed that as part of the 'Revitalising Health and Safety Strategy', the HSE required all public bodies to summarise their health and safety performances and plans in an annual report.

The Welsh Local Government Association Corporate Health and Safety Forum had also produced guidelines for local authorities on producing annual reports and the Committee was informed that this had formed the background of the authority's document.

Consideration was given to the authority's Annual Report that provided an overview of the health and safety performance of the authority between April 2003 and April 2004 and covered the following specific areas:–

- Corporate management of Health and Safety
- Statistical information

- Partnerships
- Joint consultation arrangements
- Occupational health arrangements
- Key achievements and monitoring
- Conclusion
- Action Plan

The Committee noted the content of the report and paid particular attention to the key achievements listed in Section 7 of the report and to Section 9 that set out details of the Development Plan.

## **6. Recent Health and Safety Executive (HSE) Updates**

The Committee noted the report that provided details of recent updates in HSE information, advice and guidance in respect of the following issues –

- Home working guidance
- New HSE guidance providing advice and information for employers, unions, safety representatives and safety professionals on accident investigation
- A new website providing free up to date advice on waste management and recycling
- The HSE's consultative document seeking views on the methods used by the HSE and local authorities to influence workplace health and safety standards.

## **7. Fire Risk Assessments**

The Committee was informed of the legal requirement to carry out fire risk assessments as set out in the Fire Precautions (Workforce) Regulations 1997 and the Fire Precautions (Workforce) (Amendment) Regulations 1999. It was noted that the 1997 Regulations required employers to carry out fire risk assessments on workplaces without fire risk assessments and the 1999 amendment extended this requirement to all workplaces.

The proposed Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2004, due to come into force in Spring 2005 would also remove the need for premises to be fire certified and would place an increased onus on employers to manage fire safety through assessing and controlling the risks.

The report explained that South Wales Fire and Rescue Service were now issuing enforcement action against organisations without up to date assessments.

The Committee considered the authority's position and Mrs Townsend indicated that the Chief Property Officer was preparing a report for Corporate Management Team proposing that Property took on responsibility for organising fire risk assessments corporately. Property would then decide how best to carry out the assessments and this could include in-house provision or engaging external consultants. However, until a decision was taken on the management of risk assessments, it was noted that each directorate would remain responsible for planning and risk prioritising fire risk assessments and responding to any notices issued by the Fire Service.

The Committee noted the importance of this issue and it was agreed that an update report would be submitted to the next meeting.

## **8. HSE Inspection of Refuse and Cleansing**

The Committee was informed that the HSE had indicated that it would be inspecting 50% of local authorities in Wales as part of a planned inspection programme and that the authority's Refuse and Recycling Section was due to be visited with the planned inspection taking place between 9th November and Christmas.

It was noted that the inspection would be based on the HSE's priority programme and would focus on –

- Working at heights
- Musculoskeletal disorders
- Stress
- Workplace transport
- Slips and trips

A member referred to the above programme and in particular to the focus on 'stress' and stated that refuse workers were often more stressed during the Christmas period with increased workloads without the added anxiety that could be caused by an impending inspection and asked how stress levels would be monitored.

Mr. White (Refuse and Recycling Officer) reported that over the Christmas period, extra refuse vehicles and staff were employed to share the increased workload to avoid incidences of stress.

Mrs. Hortop (Occupational Health Nurse) reported that the authority had systems in place to help staff suffering from stress and she referred in particular to the free Stressline available to all members of staff. She also indicated that Stress Management Courses had recently been held for Managers to enable them to recognise signs of stress and to offer support and guidance as appropriate.

The Committee was also informed that the Traffic Consultant's report and recommendations in respect of pedestrian and vehicular safety at the Tir-y-berth Depot was currently being considered. In addition, Mrs. Townsend reported that she had undertaken a spot inspection at the Depot and noted a number of significant issues and as a result would be submitting a report directly to the Chief Executive Officer.

The Committee noted the report.

## **9. Health and Safety Liaison Officers Group**

The Committee noted the report that outlined the latest discussions, which had taken place in the Health and Safety Liaison Officers Group.

Consideration was given to the notes of the Group's meeting held on 22nd September and during discussion, reference was made to Minute no 8, entitled 'Glazing'. The Committee noted that the authority had informed the HSE that all glass up to 2.1 metres would be made safe and that Mr. Young (Property Services) would be preparing a report for Corporate Management Team to develop a methodology for undertaking risk assessments.

The Committee discussed the need for risk assessments and surveys to be undertaken in schools and the cost of this exercise was highlighted. Following discussion, it was agreed that a progress report would be submitted to the next meeting.

The Committee noted the report.

**10. Asbestos Prosecution**

The Committee noted the report that provided information on the outcome of the recent prosecution being brought by the HSE against the authority following accidental asbestos exposures.

**11. Kerb Laying**

Consideration was given to the report that advised of progress made by the authority in complying with the HSE requirement that kerb laying should be mechanised wherever possible.

The Committee was informed that Network Contracting Services (NCS), when undertaking 'spot repairs' were currently permitted to manually handle kerbs as part of 'term maintenance' work. Wherever this method of work was used, a written risk assessment stating that no other method was practicable, would be required.

It was also noted that the risk of back injury had been minimised by the use of 'half' kerbs weighing 25 kgs and that 20 kg kerbs would be introduced when available.

On all other work, vacuum lifting devices were being used and Mr Griffiths (Senior Corporate Safety Officer) reported that he envisaged that further lifting machines would be in use in the future.

The Committee welcomed the use of mechanical lifting devices by NCS but some members expressed concern about private contractors and queried whether the authority monitored whether they used such equipment. Members also asked about training and asked whether staff had received direct training from the machine manufacturers.

Following discussion, it was agreed that a further report covering the issues raised by members would be submitted to the next meeting.

**12. Safety of Machinery in Schools**

The Committee noted the report that provided an update in the safety of machinery in schools and that detailed the remedial action taken to date to ensure the safety of staff and pupils using machinery in schools.

**13. Date of Next Meeting**

It was noted that the next meeting of the Committee would be held at the Council Offices, Tredomen on Wednesday, 12th January 2005.

The meeting closed at 11.15 a.m.