



CORPORATE HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMITTEE

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT THE COUNCIL OFFICES, TREDOMEN
ON WEDNESDAY, 12TH JANUARY 2005 AT 10.00 A.M.**

PRESENT:

Councillor L.R. Rees - Chairman
Councillor D.T. Wiltshire - Vice-Chairman

Councillors:

P.J. Bevan, J.O. Evans, G.R. Price and A.J. Pritchard

Together with:

R. Webb (Director of the Environment), S. Delahaye (Chief Trading Standards Officer), 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), K. Meredith (Health and Safety Officer), J. Rowlands (Health and Safety Officer), A. Young (Property Division), Ms D. Stamp (Senior Insurance and Risk Officer), Ms D. Jones (Senior Health and Safety Officer), Ms D. Llewellyn (Senior Health and Safety Officer), Mrs. H. Hortop (Occupational Health Nurse), R. Gough (Personnel Manager – Standards and Development), Ms L. Williams (Chief Executive's – Catering and Cleaning Services) and Mrs. K. Wall (Committee Services Officer)

Trade Union Representatives

B. Barrowman, A. Jones, J. Poole, N. Short and Ms G. Taylor

APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor B. Barker, P.V. Neale (Health and Safety Officer) and A. Morton (UNISON)

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 Corporate Health and Safety Committee meeting held on 13th October 2004.

REPORTS OF THE DIRECTOR OF THE ENVIRONMENT

3. KERB LAYING

The Committee noted the report that provided information on the methods of kerb laying carried out by, or on behalf of the Council.

4. OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH/ACCIDENT REPORTING SYSTEM

Consideration was given to the report that updated the Committee in respect of the current position regarding implementing a new Occupational Health/Accident reporting system.

In 2004, a decision had been taken to purchase a new software system to meet health and safety and occupational health needs and also to create a link between accidents/incidents and rehabilitation/treatment. Following a tendering process, two systems had been short-listed and a decision was to be taken imminently on the preferred system with an implementation date of 1st April 2005.

The Committee noted the report and acknowledged that the new system would simplify the process for recording accidents and would also allow easy collation of statistics, thereby resulting in easier identification of problem areas enabling more effective targeting and improved management of health and safety.

5. CORPORATE HEALTH AND SAFETY UNIT UPDATE

The Committee noted the report that provided information on the following current activities of the Corporate Health and Safety Unit –

- Ongoing work on the strategic approach and direction of the authority in terms of managing health and safety to ensure full legal compliance and a consistent approach to health and safety management across the authority;
- Preparation of the Draft Revitalising Health and Safety Strategy;
- Preparation of draft policies in respect of Latex, Display Screen Equipment, Young Persons, Lone Working and Contractors;
- Development of a corporate auditing procedure and draft audit documents;
- Specific work with Directorate Health and Safety Officers to progress specific areas of concern e.g. glazing, asbestos and fire safety.

6. FIRE RISK ASSESSMENT UPDATE

The Committee was informed that there was a legal requirement to carry out fire risk assessments at Caerphilly County Borough Council work places in accordance with the Fire Precautions (Workplace) Regulations 1997 and the Fire Precautions (Workplace)(Amendment) Regulations 1999.

The 1997 Regulations also required employers to carry out fire risk assessments on workplaces without fire risk assessments and the 1999 amendment extended this requirement to all workplaces.

It was noted that fire risk assessments carried out to date had been organised by Directorates and therefore the level of compliance and standard of assessment had varied across the authority.

The report included an overview of the current position and the Committee noted that many of the authority's premises had not been assessed. It was also noted that South Wales Fire and Rescue Service were now issuing enforcement action against organisations without up-to-date assessments.

Mrs. Townsend (Corporate Health and Safety Manager) reported that a recent meeting with South Wales Fire and Rescue Service had indicated that a five-year programme of risk prioritised fire risk assessments would be acceptable to ensure legal compliance. Following the fire risk assessment, a detailed action plan would need to be prepared detailing remedial works and timescales to ensure compliance.

The Committee noted that there would likely be a significant cost associated with both the initial assessments and remedial work arising from them. The Committee was also informed that the Chief Property Officer was preparing a report for Corporate Management Team proposing that Property Services should take responsibility for organising fire risk assessments corporately.

The Committee noted the information provided.

7. GLAZING

The Committee was informed that the Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Act placed a legal requirement on employers to ensure that all glazing in workplaces, where necessary, safety glazed or protected against breakage so that it would break safely.

It was also noted that the HSE had issued a Prohibition Notice on the authority in April 2004 following an accident at Plasyfelin Infants School. The Education and Leisure Directorate had commenced a programme of glazing risk assessments undertaken by a competent contractor and remedial works to ensure that all glazing met an acceptable standard.

This approach had been supported by the HSE and would be supplemented by guidance for Building Managers on glazing safety and a programme of corporate and directorate audits to ensure compliance.

The Property Services Division was also preparing a report for Corporate Management Team asking for funding necessary to carry out glazing risk assessments on all premises and the Committee noted that the costs associated with remedial works would need to be met from Directorate budgets.

The Committee noted the report and the actions taken to date.

8. HEALTH AND SAFETY LIAISON GROUP

The Committee received and noted the minutes of the last meeting of the Health and Safety Liaison Officer Group held on 14th December 2004 and noted that the next meeting would be held on 1st February 2005.

9. RECENT HEALTH AND SAFETY EXECUTIVE UPDATES

The Committee noted the report that provided an update in respect of the following recent health and safety updates –

- Review of the First Aid at Work Regulations 1981;
- HSE health and safety statistics for 2003/2004;
- HSE stress management standards.

10. DRAFT REVITALISING HEALTH AND SAFETY STRATEGY

The Committee was informed that the Corporate Health and Safety Unit had prepared a draft Revitalising Health and Safety Strategy for the authority. The document was currently in a draft format and a consultation exercise was taking place across the authority.

It was noted that the Strategy set out the direction of the authority and established priorities for the next five years. The Strategy would also be supported by a detailed annual action plan to ensure that its aims would be translated into tangible objectives and targets and performance against these targets could be measured to demonstrate continuous improvement.

The Committee noted the content of the Strategy and members were asked to contact the Corporate Health and Safety Unit if they had any specific comments.

11. DRAFT LATEX POLICY

The Committee was informed that the HSE had written to all local authorities requesting details of their policy and arrangements for ensuring that employees did not suffer sensitisation and ill-health as a result of working with latex products and in particular, latex gloves.

In response, the Corporate Health and Safety Unit had prepared a draft policy on the use of latex at work and a copy had been included in the agenda papers.

Consideration was given to the draft policy and it was noted that it was required to meet the authority's legal responsibilities under the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002 and to prevent any criminal or civil claims.

During discussion, members emphasised the need for employees to be responsible for their own actions and attention was drawn to Section 5 of the document that outlined the specific responsibilities of the Chief Executive Officer, Directors, Managers, employees, the Corporate Health and Safety Unit, the Directorate Health and Safety Officer, the Occupational Health Nurse and the Procurement Section.

Following discussion, the Committee approved the Draft Policy on the Use of Latex at Work and agreed that it should be implemented across the authority with immediate effect.

12. ACCIDENT STATISTICS

Consideration was given to the report that provided information in respect of the numbers and types of industrial accidents that had occurred to staff of the Council during the period 1st July to 31st September 2004.

Members asked a number of questions about specific incidents outlined in the report and

particular attention was paid to an accident that had occurred in the Education and Leisure Directorate when a groundsman sprained his back when he slipped whilst strimming a bank.

During discussion, a member asked if grounds staff were issued with special spiked footwear to use when working on slopes.

Mrs. Townsend reported that personal protective equipment was issued to staff as required but she noted the issue raised and agreed to bring this to the attention of the Safety Officers Liaison Group.

The Committee noted the information provided.

13. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Details of the following schedule of meetings were circulated to those present -

Monday, 4th April 2005 at 10.00 a.m. at the Council Offices, Tredomen;

Monday, 4th July 2005 at 10.00 a.m. at the Council Offices, Tredomen;

Thursday, 6th October 2005 at 10.00 a.m. at the Council Offices, Tredomen;

Wednesday, 11th January 2006 at 10.00 a.m. at the Council Offices, Tredomen.

The meeting closed at 11.15 a.m.