



CORPORATE HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMITTEE

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT THE COUNCIL OFFICES, TREDOMEN
ON MONDAY, 4TH APRIL 2005 AT 10.00 A.M.**

PRESENT:

Councillor D.T. Wiltshire - Vice-Chairman (Presiding)

Councillors:

P.J. Bevan, J.O. Evans and A.J. Pritchard

Together with:

R. Webb (Director of the Environment), Mrs E. Townsend (Corporate Health and Safety Manager), Ms A. Wilcox (Senior Health and Safety Officer), P. Griffiths (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), Ms E. Thomas (Personnel Manager), B. Miller (Health and Safety Assistant – Education and Leisure), G. Price (Admin Officer – Education and Leisure), R. Gough (Personnel Manager – Standards and Development), Ms D. Llewellyn (Senior Health and Safety Officer), Mrs H. Hortop (Occupational Health Nurse) and Mrs K. Wall (Committee Services Officer)

Trade Union Representatives

B. Barrowman, A. Jones, J. Poole, Mrs A. Stevens, A. Morton and L. Horrocks

APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from the Chairman, Councillor L.R. Rees, Councillors B.A. Barker and G.R. Price, S. Delahaye (Chief Trading Standards Officer), D. Price (Education and Leisure), A. Young (Property Services) and Ms G. Taylor.

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 meeting of the Corporate Health and Safety Committee held on 12th January 2005.

REPORTS OF OFFICERS

Consideration was given to the following reports –

3. Draft Fire Safety Policy

Mrs Townsend (Health and Safety Manager) informed the Committee that the Corporate Health and Safety Unit had prepared a draft Fire Safety Policy (copies of which had been included in the agenda papers) and she outlined a summary of its content. It was noted that the policy was required to ensure that the Council met its legal responsibilities under the Fire Precautions Act 1971 and the Fire Precautions (Workplace) Regulations 1997 as amended and to prevent any criminal or civil claims.

The Committee welcomed the introduction of the Fire Safety Policy and approved its content for immediate implementation across the authority.

4. Health and Safety Audit Procedure

Consideration was given to the report that provided details of the health and safety audit procedure.

The Committee was informed that auditing health and safety performance was an integral part of the work of the Corporate Health and Safety Unit and was essential to ensure compliance with the HSE's guidance 'Successful Health and Safety Management'. Auditing also allowed effective measuring and monitoring of health and safety performance thus ensuring that the authority moved towards performance improvement.

Mrs Townsend reported that there had been an identified need for a transparent health and safety auditing procedure that clearly set out the audit steps and responsibilities. A copy of the Council's procedure had been appended to the report and Mrs Townsend outlined further details.

During discussion, it was noted that the auditing procedure would-

- Increase managerial accountability for health and safety ensuring that Directorate and Corporate Health and Safety Officers worked with Managers to resolve identified health and safety issues
- Set out a procedure for informing Senior Managers, Directors and if necessary, the Chief Executive in the event of serious health and safety breaches which were unable to be resolved
- Allow the authority to keep close control of health and safety concerns and enable issues to be addressed at the highest level where appropriate
- Lead to improved health and safety performances as Managers recognised their responsibilities and were clear of the implications in the event of non-compliance

Members welcomed introduction of the above auditing procedure and complimented Officers on the clear and comprehensive nature of the document.

5. Health and Safety Audits Update

Consideration was given to the report that provided details of recent audits carried out by the Corporate Health and Safety Unit.

Mrs Townsend reported that the Corporate Health Unit had commenced auditing in January

with an annual target of 300 audits. She explained that it had originally been agreed that initial audits would be topic specific and would concentrate on asbestos management and fire safety and that, to date, 69 audits had been undertaken.

Initial audits had highlighted some problems across all Directorates with the way in which asbestos and fire safety was managed and a decision had therefore been taken to reduce the number of audits until a meeting could be arranged to discuss positive ways to improve the situation. It was noted that the meeting was scheduled to take place on 8th April and that update reports would be submitted to the Committee in due course.

The Committee noted the information provided and members were informed that quarterly reports on the findings of audits carried out would be submitted to the Committee.

6. Recent HSE Updates

The Committee noted the report that provided information in respect of recent updates in Health and Safety advice and guidance.

7. Health and Safety Budget Allocation

The Committee noted the report that outlined details of the budget allocated for health and safety within the authority.

Members were informed that a total of £500,000 was likely to be allocated corporately for health and safety management in 2005/2006 and that it was anticipated that the budget would be divided as follows –

- £45,000 for glazing surveys
- £80,000 for fire assessment
- £225,000 for 16th edition electrical testing
- £35,000 for the appointment of the Back Care Adviser
- £15,000 for corporate health and safety training
- £100,000 for manual handling passports

Members were pleased to note that the above allocation would allow the authority to address the most urgent priorities and move towards delivering on some Health and Safety executive priority areas.

8. Health and Safety Liaison Officer Group

The Committee noted the minutes of the meeting of the Health and Safety Liaison Officer Group held on 2nd March 2005.

9. Draft Lone Working Policy

Mrs Townsend reported that the Corporate Health and Safety Unit had prepared a draft policy on lone working and had sent copies to Committee members and trade union representatives seeking their views prior to the document being submitted to the Committee for approval.

A number of trade union representatives present however, reported that they had not received copies of the document in advance of the meeting and in view of this, it was agreed that consideration of the document should be deferred to the next meeting.

During discussion, the following comments were also made and it was agreed that these would be discussed further at the next meeting –

- the need for emergency numbers to be pre-programmed in all mobile phones issued to lone workers
- to include consultation with trade unions under paragraph 2.3
- the need to ensure the health and safety of the contractors by not exposing them to hazards associated with lone working (paragraph 2.1) – a member asked whether information on particular individuals and household held in any of the Council's databases could be shared with contractors or sub contractors

10. Accident Statistics

The Committee noted the report that provided information in respect of the numbers and types of industrial accidents that had occurred to Council staff during the period 1st October to 31st December 2004.

11. Minutes of the Healthy Workplace Group

The minutes of the meeting of the Healthy Workplace Group held on 7th March 2005 were received and noted.

12. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

It was noted that the next meeting of the Committee would be held at the Council Offices, Tredomen on Monday, 4th July 2005 at 10.00 a.m.

The meeting closed at 11.05 a.m.

CHAIRMAN