



CORPORATE HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMITTEE

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT COUNCIL OFFICES, DYFFRYN HOUSE
ON WEDNESDAY, 12TH JULY 2006 AT 10.00 A.M.**

PRESENT:

Councillors:

Councillors P.J. Bevan, J.O. Evans, G.R. Price, A.J. Pritchard, L.R. Rees and D.T. Wiltshire.

Together with:

R. Webb (Director of the Environment), S. Delahaye (Head of Public Protection), E. Townsend (Health and Safety Manager), K. Rogers (Senior Health and Safety Officer), P. Griffiths (Senior Health and Safety Officer), H. Hortop (Occupational Health Nurse), C.M. Hadley (Occupational Health Nurse), P. James (Health and Safety Officer), A.J. Powell (Health and Safety Officer), K. Meredith (Health and Safety Welfare Officer), R. Ellis (Health and Safety Officer), B. Miller (Health and Safety Support Assistant), H.A. Griffin (Administrator, Corporate Health and Safety Unit), T. White (Refuse and Cleansing Officer), A. Young (Client Manager, Property Division) and R. Thomas (Committee Services Officer).

Trade Union Representative:

B. Barrowman, P. Jones, A. Morton and J. Poole

APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from A. Stevens (SHA), G. Taylor (UNSION), P. Neale (Health and Safety Welfare Officer), D. Llewellyn (Senior Health and Safety Officer), Dr. P.A. Roberts (Back Care Advisor).

1. APPOINT CHAIRMAN

Councillor D. Wiltshire was appointed Chairman for the ensuing year.

2. APPOINT VICE-CHAIRMAN

Councillor L. Rees was appointed Vice-Chairman for the ensuing year.

3. WELCOME

The Chairman welcomed all members to the new council offices and Emma Townsend thanked the committee for the gift and well wishes she received following the birth of her son.

4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made at the meeting.

5. MINUTES

RESOLVED that the following minutes be approved as correct records and signed by the chairman.

Minutes of the Corporate Health and Safety Committee held on 12 April 2006.

6. FUTURE MEETING DATES

Meeting dates were confirmed as set out below:

- Wednesday 18th October at Pontllanfraith Chamber at 10.00 a.m.
- Wednesday 10th January at Pontllanfraith Chamber (provisional date) at 10.00 a.m.
- Wednesday 11th April at Pontllanfraith Chamber (provisional date) at 10.00 a.m.
- Wednesday 11th July at Pontllanfraith Chamber (provisional date) at 10.00 a.m.
- Wednesday 10th October at Pontllanfraith Chamber (provisional date) at 10.00 a.m.

7. REPORTS OF OFFICERS

Consideration was given to the following draft Health and Safety Policy reports -

7.1 Mobile Phones and Driving

The Health and Safety Manager asked members to consider the policy with the deletion of paragraph 3.1.

Members were informed of the Authorities legal requirements and that several consultations had taken place over a period of 12 months, in order to produce the policy. This included views from CMT and the union(s).

The policy confirmed using a mobile phone whilst driving was prohibited unless a risk assessment for a hands free device had been carried out. The device had to be a totally hands free kit, installed into the vehicle and the driver must consider it safe to use the kit, at the time of taking the call.

Members noted the contents of the report and the policy was agreed.

7.2 Working from Home

The Health and Safety Manager confirmed the policy was updated to reflect changes in people's working patterns and more flexible working conditions. The policy gave details of protective and preventative measures to be implemented by the Authority to ensure the health, safety and welfare of its employees in relation to individuals working from home. The policy also sets out the arrangements and responsibilities for employees and their managers.

Members noted the contents of the report and the policy was agreed.

8. OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH DEPARTMENT ANNUAL REPORT 2005 – 2006

The Occupational Health Nurse welcomed and introduced her new colleague Ceri Hadley, who recently commenced employment.

The report was introduced to inform members, management and trade union safety representatives of the current situation with regard to the provision of occupational health.

The report highlighted the continued increase in demand for the service and noted the current accommodation and administration staffing levels presented the biggest challenge for meeting the Authorities future demands.

Members were informed a new reporting system would become available in the autumn, allowing more comprehensive data to be collected and reported on.

Members noted the contents of the report.

9. HEALTH AND SAFETY ANNUAL REPORT

The Health and Safety Manager introduced the report to inform members, management and trade union safety representatives advising them it provides an overview of the health and safety performance of the Authority between April 2005 and April 2006.

The report outlined the health and safety structure within the Authority and covered corporate management of Health and Safety, statistical information, partnerships, joint consultation arrangements, occupational health arrangements, key achievements and monitoring, along with a conclusion and development plan.

The report also provided a comprehensive overview of health and safety performance across the Authority and demonstrated the Authority's commitment to becoming exemplars of health and safety performance.

Particular attention was made to the conclusion and development plan (section 9 of the report) and the need to increase awareness and responsibility of staff when accidents happen.

Members commented on the need for consistency across Authorities in order to make comparisons year on year. Officers confirmed that all performance indicators (PIs) were standard, but the content of the written report may vary slightly.

Members asked whether officers had reviewed the National Assembly for Wales's 'New Appetite for Life', (about healthier eating in schools). Occupational Health Officers confirmed this was a statutory requirement and had led to corporate health standards, currently been addressed with the Caerphilly Health Alliance Group.

Members noted the contents of the report but asked that the last sentence of the first paragraph in section 9, be amended to read:

“Over the next year it is planned to build on this progress ensuring the authority has in place a robust health and safety framework.”

10. CORPORATE HEALTH AND SAFETY GROUP

The report informed members, management and trade union safety representatives of the latest discussions that have taken place in the Corporate Health and Safety Group on 17th May 2006.

The Corporate Health and Safety Group (formally the, Health and Safety Liaison Group) consists of the Corporate Health and Safety Unit, Directorate Health and Safety Officers and Managers. The Group meets on a monthly basis. The purpose of the group is to ensure consistency of advice and interpretation of legislation, to share information and develop coherent cross directorate strategies, to effectively manage health and safety risks within the Authority.

The committee discussed the report and highlighted the need for consistency when making comparisons on performance indicators. Officers confirmed they were reviewing the current recording systems and that the Authority was insured against third party claims, provided the correct measures/checks were undertaken on a regular basis.

Members noted the contents of the report.

11. ACCIDENT STATISTICS – 1ST JANUARY 2006 TO 31ST MARCH 2006

The report informed members, management and trade union safety representatives of the numbers and types of industrial accidents which have occurred to staff of Caerphilly County Borough Council during the period 1st January to 31st March 2006.

The Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrence Regulations 1995 require accidents which arise as a result of, or in connection with, work to be categorised as: Fatal Accidents; Major injury accidents; or Accidents which result in more than three consecutive days absence. These need to be reported to the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) and are included within the report.

In addition, if actual physical violence which results in any of the above or an accident to a person not employed by the Authority, (and they are subsequently taken directly to hospital following an accident which occurs as a direct result of, in connection with, or arises out of the work activity), they too are reportable to the Enforcing Authority and contained in the report.

The committee noted an increase in the number of reports logged as staff became more aware of the need to register incidents. This trend was likely to continue.

The committee discussed the statistical findings and stressed the need to address the less significant accidents as well as the more serious ones and to look into the cause of the accidents. Officers advised the committee that a new system for registering incidents was due in six months. This would be able to link departments and claims and would give a better breakdown of trends and figures. Greater root cause analysis would then be possible.

Members noted the contents of the report.

12. THE PROVISION OF OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH SERVICES IN LOCAL AUTHORITIES IN WALES

The report informed members, management and trade union safety representatives of a report agreed by the WLGA/Occupational Health Forum.

Two years ago the WLGA established an Occupational Health Forum. Hazel Hortop (Occupational Health Manager) was elected chair for a second term in April of this year. The

group consists of local authority Occupational Health advisors and managers with responsibility for external occupational health provision. The group tasked the occupational health professionals to write as comprehensive document outlining best practice in occupational health provision.

The report was the final document accepted by the WLGA at the last forum meeting.

Members noted the contents of the report.

13. HEALTH AND SAFETY AUDITS

The report informed members, management and trade union safety representatives of the recent audits carried out by the Corporate Health and Safety Unit.

Auditing is part of the remit of the Corporate Health and Safety Unit and is necessary to ensure that the Authority is meeting its obligations under health and safety law. The Corporate Health and Safety Unit commenced auditing in January 2005, with an annual target for the year 2005-06, of 200 audits.

As part of the audit programme all Directors have been provided with a quarterly report on audits carried out to date, action plans received by the Corporate Health and Safety Unit, and outstanding action plans. It was noted this was the first year all Directors had returned their respective action plans – a sign that each department was taking health and safety seriously and that managers recognised the issues raised.

Members wished to place on record their acknowledgement of achievements made, by all those involved.

14. RECENT HSE UPDATES

The Senior Health and Safety Manager introduced the report and highlighted the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister announcement to delay the coming into force of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (RRFSO). Previously the government has announced that the order would come into force throughout England and Wales on 1 April 2006. A new date is yet to be confirmed however the current proposed commencement date has been set at 1 October 2006.

It was highlighted that following nine fatalities, including seven involving vehicles which occurred in the waste and recycling industry in an eight-week period earlier this year, the Health and Safety Executive have issued a safety alert and updated their guidance with regards to Waste and Recycling Vehicles and Street Collection. Further information can be found at www.hse.gov.uk/waste/index.htm

Members noted the contents of the report.

15. MANAGEMENT POLICY BRIEFINGS

The purpose of the report was to inform members, management and trade union safety representatives of the position with regards to the provision of Health and Safety Policy Briefings for Managers.

Following requests from management at the Corporate Health and Safety Group meeting the Corporate Health and Safety Unit has commenced a programme of Health and Safety Briefings on Lone Working, Display Screen Equipment and Contractor Selection, Management and Monitoring.

A Handbook had been developed to accompany the briefing sessions which included copies of the presentation slides, policy summary documents and copies of the policies discussed.

To date 13 briefing sessions had taken place and 114 managers attended the sessions. A further 5 sessions were due and union representatives had been invited.

Members wished to place on record their recognition of the progress made in reaching core members of staff.

16. VIOLENCE AT WORK REGISTER (REPORT AND PRESENTATION)

Paul James, Health and Safety Officer, presented the report to members and brought their attention to the following points:

- the Authority has a legal obligation to protect the health and safety of employees. This includes risks associated from potentially violent and aggressive individuals/addresses/dangerous dogs etc;
- the Authority operates a computerised corporate register of violent people and addresses, although access is limited to those individuals who deal directly with the public and have potential face-to-face meetings with individuals during the course of their work. This database is compliant with the Data Protection Act and the Freedom of Information Act;
- the information contained in the database is factual and submitted by employees who have come into contact with a violent/aggressive individual/dangerous dogs etc, which they believe could pose a risk to other council employees;
- the information on the register is reviewed every 6 months to ensure its accuracy. To ensure the information is correct, fair and balanced, additional information can be added following any subsequent meetings with an individual/address;
- on 14 August 2006 the system would be re-launched to encourage managers and staff to use the facility and to ensure the protection of the Authorities employees. As part of this re-launch, posters would be placed in highly visual locations, information would be issued with staffs' payslips and the systems' ticker tape would highlight the register.

Members were advised they could also register an individual/address and obtain access (subject to approval) to the register.

Members questioned whether any notification was issued to the individual/address following registration on the database. Officers noted that following legal advice, no notification would be sent unless criminal proceedings were being taken.

The meeting closed at 11.20 a.m.

CHAIRMAN