



CORPORATE HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMITTEE

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT COUNCIL OFFICES, Tŷ DYFFRYN, ON
WEDNESDAY, 18TH APRIL 2007 AT 10.00 AM**

PRESENT:

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

Councillors:

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

Together with:

A. O'Sullivan (Director of the Environment), S. Delahaye (Head of Public Protection), E. Townsend (Health and Safety Manager), K. Rogers (Senior Health and Safety Officer), B. Kendrick (Health and Safety Officer), R. Lewis (Corporate Health and Safety Trainer), P. Neale (Health and Safety Welfare Officer), D. Llewellyn (Senior Health and Safety Officer), T. Phillips (Health and Safety Officer), P. James (Health and Safety Officer), T. White (Refuse and Cleaning Officer), D. Price (Principal Parks & Open Spaces Officer), A. Young (Client Manager), L. Rogers (Health and Safety Officer), A. Williams (Client Manager), R. Thomas (Committee Services Officer).

Trade Union Representative: Ms G. Taylor (UNISON), B. Barrowman (GMB), J.W. Poole (UCATT), P. Jones (AMICUS)

APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor G.R. Price, A. Morton (UNISON), Ms A. Stevens (ASCL).

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made at the beginning or during the meeting.

2. WELCOME

The Chairman welcomed Anthony O'Sullivan, Director of the Environment and Beth Kendrick, Health and Safety Officer, to their first meeting of the Health and Safety Committee since taking up their appointments at CCBC.

3. MINUTES

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Corporate Health and Safety Committee held on 10th January 2007 be approved as a correct record and signed by the chairman.

MATTERS ARISING

4. Corporate Manslaughter

Members were advised that further to the meeting of 18th October 2006, the draft bill had been amended by the House of Lords and was yet to be finalised. Due to these amendments and lack of final version of the bill, Ian Medicott's address to the committee had been deferred. It was agreed that once a more definite statement had been received regarding the bill, Mr Medicott would attend the committee to update members and to respond to any questions.

5. Terms of Reference and Membership of the Corporate Health and Safety Committee (Minute No. 6)

Members were informed that substitutes to the committee were allowed, with voting rights. This had been confirmation by the monitoring officer. Members were asked to give advance notice to the secretariat, if a substitution was required.

6. Occupational Health Forum (Minute No. 18)

Members were advised due to work commitments, the report detailed in the minutes would be presented at a later committee.

7. DRAFT MANUAL HANDLING POLICY

Mrs E. Townsend, Health and Safety Manager, introduced the report to inform Members, Management and Trade Union Safety Representatives of the authority's first draft Manual Handling Policy. The policy was required to ensure that the authority met its legal requirements.

Members were informed the Corporate Health and Safety Unit had prepared the draft policy following extensive consultation and members' endorsement was now sought. If agreed, the policy would be put before the HR Strategy Group and assuming that no changes were required, the policy would then be submitted to Cabinet for approval.

Members discussed the policy and welcomed its introduction, but asked that the following adjustments be made:

- (i) Para. 6.3.9 - insert the words 'and/or equipment' after '... all the information ...';
- (ii) Section 6.8.5 - sentence to be added to reflect that guidance should be given on the most suitable innovative equipment;
- (iii) Para. 6.8.9 - remove the first 'be' in the sentence;
- (iv) Para. 6.8.10 - insert 'protect' when describing the appropriate footwear; and
- (v) Para. 7.1.7 - second sentence, replace the word 'here' with 'there'.

8. CORPORATE HEALTH AND SAFETY TRAINING – PRESENTATION

Mr R. Lewis, Corporate Health and Safety Trainer, gave a presentation to update Members, Management and Trade Union Safety Representatives on the provision of Corporate Health and Safety Training.

Members were reminded that previous Health and Safety training had been limited, but following recognition of the need to tackle key 'Corporate' issues and to ensure Managers were trained to a consistent standard, CMT agreed the appointment of a Corporate Health and Safety Trainer on a 1 year fixed term contract in March in 2006. Mr Lewis took up the post in October 2006 and was tasked with the principal function of delivering Building Managers Training for all those who own or control a premise occupied by CCBC employees.

To date the training had covered all Directorates with 18 courses and 138 employees trained. The training was supported by a Building Managers handbook, which allowed one point of information and a location to store maintenance and assessment records. The Trainer had worked closely with Directorates to ensure the courses were tailored to meet their needs and address any Directorate specific arrangements. Following feedback, the course content was continually reviewed to ensure content was accurate, up to date and reflected any issues raised.

Most significantly the received feedback showed that from 138 attendees, on a scale of 1 to 6, 44% gave a score of 6 (with six being excellent) and 48% gave a score of 5.

Following on from this success, a training away day involving Health and Safety Officers and Management Representatives took place in January to discuss the ongoing training needs and made recommendations as to how this should be progressed. The away day identified the need for Health and Safety training for Senior Managers and Middle Managers, in addition to training for Building Managers. It was also identified that there was a need for corporate training on certain issues such as risk assessment, asbestos awareness, and accident investigation. The away day did not cover front-line operational training needs although it was recognised there was a significant need which needed progression within Directorates.

A report went before CMT recently and further funding had been agreed to build on the progress made to date and to allow the delivery of additional training.

Members thanked Mr Lewis for his informative report and congratulated officers on the success of the initial training. Members asked if officers had considered joint training sessions for all levels of staff in attendance. It was confirmed this had been discussed at the away day and officers had agreed it would be useful to progress certain elements of Health and Safety training, in this fashion. The Chairman reiterated that no levels existing regarding Health and Safety and suggested the Director of the Environment and the Trade Union representatives meet to discuss future training needs.

9. CEFN FFOREST PROHIBITION NOTICE

Mr A. Williams, Client Manager in Property Services, introduced the report to inform Members of a recent Prohibition Notice, issued by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) following roof works at Cefn Fforest Leisure Centre, and to report on agreed actions.

Officers informed members of the circumstances that led the HSE to serve a Prohibition Notice on the authority on the 16th January 2007. This was as a result of work carried out by an appointed contractor on a flat single storey roof at Cefn Fforest Leisure Centre, without edge protection in place. It was noted a Prohibition Notice was also served upon the roofing contractor – Rhondda Asphalt Company.

Members were told a meeting was held on the 12th February 2007, between officers of the HSE, Corporate and Directorate Health & Safety Units and Property Division. The HSE identified a number of key issues that required addressing by the authority and they confirmed they would not be taking formal action, but would write to the Chief Executive, outlining the issues and their expectations.

As a result of the Prohibition Notice the council had invoked its formal procedure and a cross Directorate Working Group was established to ensure that appropriate actions took place to corporately address the HSE concerns. This Working Group is chaired by Stuart Bates (Chief Property Officer) who prepared a timetable and action plan to deal with issues identified by the HSE. The Group met on the 27th March 2007 and in a well-debated meeting, applied specific timescales to the prepared 'Action Plan'. The Group are due to reconvene on the 1st of May 2007.

In addition Property Services was updating and reviewing its database of all contractors and service providers it engages on the authority's behalf. This process involved requesting additional details from approximately 90 companies. To date there had been a positive response and vetting was to commence in conjunction with Corporate Health and Safety assistance.

Members were asked to note that a number of other service areas had also adopted Property Division's initiative and would be writing formally to their contractors/suppliers.

Members thanked officers for the report and asked for clarification as to existing policy for contractors and to the investigations, post incident. Members of the committee acknowledged it was difficult to monitor and police all risks and contractors, and that the authority was constantly trying to strike a balance between effective working and Health and Safety precautions. It was recognised that effective contractor management is essential and that the Authority is committed to ensuring there are effective health and safety controls in place.

10. ACCIDENT STATISTICS

Ms B. Kendrick, Health and Safety Officer, introduced the report to inform Members, Management and Trade Union Safety Representatives of the numbers and types of industrial accidents that had occurred to staff of CCBC during the period 1st October to 31st December 2006.

The committee discussed the statistical findings of the report and asked officers to clarify a number of incidents recorded in appendix A - the description of reportable accidents for each Directorate. These were as follows:

- (i) Education and Leisure, Non-Employee – December 2006 : members were informed that it was two different youths that fell from the fire escape at Newbridge Leisure Centre. Although it was believed that the youths were on the fire escape without undue care and attention, the cause of the incident was due to a fabrication fault on the fire escape gate. It was recognised that the fire escape was a problem area that attracted unwanted attention from youths in the area, as it provided shelter from the weather. Staff at the centre had tried to discourage this, but to date had been unsuccessful. Subsequently two claims had been received.
- (ii) Directorate of the Environment – November 2006 : members were informed that the painter who fell from the stepladder on top of a scaffold tower, placed the ladder there to easily reach the topmost of a classroom's height (5 metres). The scaffolding was not fixed and moved away from the wall, causing the ladder to topple. It was recognised that the painter had not used the correct equipment for the job.

- (iii) Social Services – November 2006 : members enquired as to the carer that was mauled by the dog, reported at the time in the local newspapers. Due to the seriousness of the carer's injuries, she had not yet been questioned about the incident, but was currently receiving medical assistance and counselling. The dog had been put to sleep. Officers confirmed a risk assessment had been carried out previously and processes put into place. It was unclear at this time, why these processes failed on this particular occasion. Members asked that best wishes be sent to the carer on behalf of the committee.

Members noted the contents of the report and suggested that at the next meeting a report be presented by Mr Dayton Griffiths, Insurance and Risk Manager on the number of claims made against the authority, with details of successful defences.

11. ACCIDENT REPORTING SYSTEM – VERBAL UPDATE

Mrs K. Rogers, Senior Health and Safety Officer, gave members of the committee a verbal update on the new accident reporting system, as discussed at previous meetings of the group.

Members received confirmation that the system went live on 2nd April and work was ongoing to eliminate small defects in the programme. Training was ongoing to key users and administrative staff and work was being carried out with the IT branch to transfer all data from the old system to the new.

Officers informed members the new accident reporting forms were now available on the intranet and gave thanks to everyone involved.

Members thanked officers for the update and received officer's confirmation that the accidents were recorded and investigated in line with HSE suggestions.

12. CORPORATE HEALTH AND SAFETY GROUP

Mrs E. Townsend, Health and Safety Manager, presented the report to inform Members, Management and Trade Union Safety Representatives of the latest discussions that had taken place in the Corporate Health and Safety Group.

Members discussed the report and noted their disappointment at the lack of attendees to the meeting and thought that members of the group had shown insufficient priorities. The Director of the Environment was pleased to observe the considerable attendance from his directorate, but confirmed he would mention the lack of other directorates at CMT later this week.

Members noted the contents of the report.

13. RECENT HSE UPDATES

Mrs K. Rogers, Senior Health and Safety Officer, introduced the report to inform Members, Management and Trade Union Safety Representatives of recent updates in Health and Safety information, advice and guidance.

Officers highlighted the following:

- (i) The Working at Height (Amendment) Regulations 2007 that came into force on 1st April 2007;

- (ii) The Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2007 that came into force on the 6th April 2007; and
- (iii) Delays to the proposed Corporate Manslaughter Bill.

Members noted the contents of the report.

14. HEALTH AND SAFETY EXECUTIVE ACTION

Mrs E. Townsend, Health and Safety Manager, presented the report to inform Members, Management and Trade Union Safety Representatives of recent Health and Safety Executive visits and associated actions.

Members discussed the report and asked for further information regarding the incident at Heolddu Comprehensive School, Bargoed. Officers confirmed a teacher was preparing an experiment to be used in an after-school activity, whilst in a classroom being used during the school's registration period. The prepared paste reacted with its container and resulted in the chemicals making contact with the teacher and 4 pupils. All were taken to hospital as a precautionary measure. The school was now reviewing the use of the classrooms while registration was ongoing.

Members noted the contents of the report.

15. HEALTH AND SAFETY AUDITS

Mrs E. Townsend, Health and Safety Manager, introduced the report to inform Members, Management and Trade Union Safety Representatives of recent audits carried out by the Corporate Health and Safety Unit between 1st October and 31st December 2006.

Members were informed that 52 audits had been carried out during the third quarter of 2006-07, concentrating mainly on glazing safety. Re-audits were also carried out on previous audits undertaken on DSE, Risk Assessment, Lone Working, Asbestos, Fire and COSHH. In addition, members were told the Corporate Health and Safety Unit had a target of 210 audits for 2006-07 and 208 had been completed, despite the challenge of significant staffing issues during this period.

It was also recognised that Managers were increasingly completing and returning their action plans.

Members noted the contents of the report and congratulated officers on the number of audits completed.

16. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Date of next meeting - Wednesday, 11th July 2007 - Tŷ Dyffryn, Ystrad Mynach.

The meeting closed at 11.10 a.m.

CHAIRMAN