



CORPORATE HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT COUNCIL OFFICES, PENALLTA HOUSE ON MONDAY, 15TH SEPTEMBER 2008 AT 10.00 A.M.

PRESENT:

Councillor A.J. Pritchard - Chairman
Councillor P.J. Bevan - Vice-Chairman

Councillors:

J.O. Evans, C. Hobbs

Together with:

N. Barnett (Director of Corporate Services), G. Hardacre (Head of People Management & Development), E. Townsend (Health and Safety Manager), K. Rogers (Senior Health and Safety Officer), B. Hopkins (Assistant Director, Planning and Strategy), D. Jones (Senior Health and Safety Officer), P. Griffiths (Senior Health and Safety Officer), D. Llewellyn (Senior Health and Safety Officer), A. Young (Client Manager, Building Consultancy), P. Smythe (Building Maintenance Manager), A. Williams (Client Manager, Building Consultancy), K. Meredith (Health and Safety Welfare Officer), T. Phillips (Health and Safety Officer), R. Thomas (Committee Services Officer)

Trade Union Representatives: A. Morton (UNISON)

APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors D.T. Hardacre and L.R. Rees. Ms G. Taylor (UNISON), R. Ellis (Health and Safety Officer) and T. White (Refuse and Cleaning Officer)

CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENT

The Chairman referred to the sad news that Mike Meeson, the council's Building Consultancy Manager, passed away recently after a short but serious illness. He recognised Mike's commitment to the Committee and confirmed the funeral arrangements for those wishing to pay their respects.

Members stood for a minute silence.

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

2. MINUTES

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

Corporate Health and Safety Committee held on 18th June 2008 (minute nos. 1 - 10, on page nos. 1 - 5).

3. MATTERS ARISING

3.1 Item No. 5 – Corporate Manslaughter - Presentation

Officers informed Members that it would be highly unlikely that Members of the Council would be prosecuted under the Health and Safety at Work, etc, Act 1974, although theoretically, if Members acted against advice, this was possible.

3.2 Item No. 8 – Lone Working Health and Safety Audits

Councillor A.J. Pritchard advised Members that during the recent Trade Union Conference, this subject had been the major topic.

4. DRAFT CORPORATE HEALTH AND SAFETY CONTRACTOR MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS

The report informed Members, Management and Trade Union Safety Representatives of the proposed Corporate Health and Safety Contractor Management Arrangements and to seek Members' approval of the draft document prior to its presentation to CMT and Cabinet.

Officers confirmed the draft policy had undergone extensive consultation and came in two parts : the first covering Health and Safety Requirements for the Selection and Management of Contractors for Provision of Goods and Services, and the second covering Health and Safety Requirements for the Selection and Management of Construction Contractors.

Members sought affirmation that references of construction contractors were obtained and verified. Officers confirmed this formed part of the detailed questionnaire that contractors had to complete in the initial selection process. All information was stored on the corporate contractor database. A database for the provision of goods and services was currently under review and it was hoped to ultimately have one database for all.

Members noted the contents of the report and agreed the corporate contractor management arrangements, be submitted to CMT and Cabinet.

5. DRAFT NOISE AT WORK POLICY AND CORPORATE MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS

The report informed Members, Management and Trade Union Safety Representatives of the proposed Noise at Work Policy and Corporate Management Arrangements on Noise at Work and to seek Members' approval of the draft document prior to its presentation to CMT and Cabinet.

Members noted their concern as to how the policy would translate to procedure, in particular in regard to the use of suitable and sufficient hearing protection. Officers illustrated the responsibility and actions required to enforce the policy, from the individual employee and their Manager through to Health and Safety Audits. It was also recognised that as the policy was an overarching document, how it was put into practice would therefore depend upon each particular department's arrangements.

Members thanked the author of the report and noted its contents. The Committee agreed the policy and corporate management arrangements, be submitted to CMT and Cabinet.

6. ACCIDENT STATISTICS REPORT

The report informed Members, Management and Trade Union Safety Representatives of the numbers and types of work related accidents/incidents, which have occurred, during the period of April to June 2008.

Members discussed the report and sought general clarification in respect to a number of incidents listed on Appendix 2. Mr N. Barnett (Director of Corporate Services) suggested that the information go before each Directorate Management Team and Councillor C. Hobbs advised the group he was in the process of penning a report detailing the number of lost days within the authority and would incorporate the figures lost due to accidents.

Members of the Committee noted the contents of the report.

7. RECENT LEGIONELLA CONCERNS

The report informed Members, Management and Trade Union Safety Representatives of recent concerns with the contract to carry out legionella assessments.

Members were asked to note there were concerns on whether the assessment was suitable and sufficient after unsatisfactory checks were completed upon water systems (sentinel taps and a significant number of dead legs). The results of quality checks showed that 2 of the assessments were to an acceptable standard however the third assessment was not.

Further assessments have been commissioned, via Aquastat, and CCBC's Building Consultancy are also carrying out quality checks on the new assessments. The results of these will allow a decision to be made as to whether any further action is necessary to ensure that the Authority is in compliance with legislation and has taken reasonable steps to protect the health and safety of employees and others.

Members of the Committee noted the contents of the report and agreed that a further report be brought to the next meeting providing an update on the outcome of the additional checks.

8. RECENT ASBESTOS INCIDENTS

The report informed Members, Management and Trade Union Safety Representatives of two recent asbestos incidents and the subsequent Health and Safety Executive Investigation.

Officers advised that on 10th June the Caretaker and Network Manager at St Martins Comprehensive, Caerphilly suffered asbestos exposure after drilling through asbestos board and on 31st July when contractors were engaged to carry out a classroom refurbishment at Bryn Primary, they identified an area of potential asbestos. The Asbestos Team later confirmed the presence of asbestos. Re-surveys have now been commissioned for the two schools.

Both incidents are being investigated by the Health and Safety Executive and these will focus on the actions of the contractors concerned but will also consider whether the Authority took all reasonable steps to control the risks. A further report will be brought before the Committee when the HSE investigation is completed.

Members sought clarification of the policies and procedures in place and of the training undertaken by both staff and contractors. Confirmation was also given to Members the cost of the re-surveys would be met from the Corporate Health and Safety budget and advice would be sought from Legal services on the possibility of recouping costs from the Contractor.

Members of the Committee noted the contents of the report.

9. TO RECEIVE AND NOTE THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION ITEMS

- Corporate Health and Safety Group. Officers advised the next meeting date for the group had yet to be confirmed. Members were asked to note that “property services” were to be changed to “building consultancy”. A general discussion followed regarding the lack of attendance by members. Mr Barnett advised the membership of both the Corporate Health and Safety Group and the Corporate Health and Safety Committee were currently under review. The Committee noted the latest discussions that had taken place in the Corporate Health and Safety Group.
- Recent HSE Updates. Officers highlighted the recent changes from the Health and Safety Executive and clarified the need for a licence for the provision of facilities for adventure activities. The Committee noted the recent updates in Health and Safety information, advice and guidance.
- Health and Safety Audits. The Health and Safety Manager gave a presentation to inform Members of the processes involved before, during and after an audit. The criteria and timing of each audit was also clarified. The Chairman praised Managers for the return of all required Action Plans and a general discussion followed regarding their implementation. The Committee noted the information regarding recent audits carried out by the Corporate Health and Safety Unit between 1st April and 30th June 2008.

The meeting closed at 11.10 a.m.

Approved as a correct record, and subject to any amendments or corrections agreed and recorded in the minutes of the meeting held on 17th November 2008, they were signed by the Chairman.

CHAIRMAN