



CORPORATE HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE POLICY MEETING HELD AT COUNCIL OFFICES, PENALLTA HOUSE ON MONDAY, 5TH JANUARY 2009 AT 11.00 AM

PRESENT:

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

Councillors:

J.O. Evans, D.T. Hardacre, A.G. Higgs

Together with:

N. Barnett (Director of Corporate Services), G. Hardacre (Head of People Management & Development), E. Townsend (Health and Safety Manager), B. Hopkins (Assistant Director, Planning and Strategy), S. Howells (Acting Assistant Director, Resourcing & Performance), R. Thomas (Committee Services Officer).

Trade Union Representatives: B May (T&G), J.W. Poole (UCATT).

APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor L.R. Rees, S. Brassinne (UCATT) and P. Jones (AMICUS).

CHAIRMAN'S WELCOME

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the first Corporate Health and Safety Committee meeting of 2009, and wished everyone a Happy New Year. In closing, he expressed his disappointment at the lack of representatives at the Committee.

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 15th September 2008 (minutes nos. 1 - 9, on page nos. 1 - 4).

3. MATTERS ARISING

3.1 Item No. 7 – Recent Legionella Concerns

It was noted an update had not been tabled for discussion. Officers confirmed today's meeting was to discuss Policy documents and the requested report would be brought before the next meeting of the Committee. For information purposes a brief verbal update was given.

3.2 Item No. 8 – Recent Asbestos Incidents

Members enquired as to the level of exposure by St Martin's school caretaker and possible long-term effects. Officers advised the HSE were still investigating but the level of exposure was thought to be high as he was drilling into the asbestos. A full report was expected to be ready for the next meeting.

3.3 Item No. 9 – To Receive and Note the Following Information Items

Members were advised the membership review of the Corporate Health and Safety Group and the Corporate Health and Safety Committee was ongoing.

4. DRAFT RISK ASSESSMENT POLICY AND CORPORATE MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS FOR RISK ASSESSMENT

The report informed Members, Management and Trade Union Safety Representatives of the revised and updated Risk Assessment Policy and Corporate Management Arrangements for Risk Assessment. The draft document had received full consultation however due to the postponement of the Trade Union meeting in December, it would not receive direct Union consultation until Thursday, 8th January 2009.

Officers advised the existing policy has been updated to reflect the new format of a briefer, more concise policy covering commitment and responsibilities and separate corporate management arrangements. The revised policy and corporate management arrangements have been subject to minor changes, which are primarily small working changes.

Members discussed the draft policy and sought clarification on a number of items including the definition of 'reasonably practicable' and confirmation of line manager/Director responsibility.

Members of the Committee noted the contents of the report and agreed the corporate management arrangements, subject to the following amendments:

- Adjustment of page numbering; and
- General punctuation correction.

5. DRAFT DISPLAY SCREEN EQUIPMENT POLICY AND CORPORATE MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS

The report informed Members, Management and Trade Union Safety Representatives of the revised and updated Display Screen Equipment Policy and associated Corporate Management Arrangements. The draft document had received full consultation however due to the postponement of the Trade Union meeting in December, it would not receive direct Union consultation until Thursday, 8th January 2009.

Officers advised the existing policy has been updated to reflect the new format of a briefer, more concise policy covering commitment and responsibilities, separate corporate management arrangements and changes in technology.

Members discussed the draft policy in detail and sought clarification regarding a number of issues including eyesight tests and related payments, working from home arrangements, completion of the appropriate risk assessment form and hot desking arrangements.

In closing Members questioned why there was no reference made to Councillors within the report and policy as many of them used hot desking and worked from home. Officers advised that guidance is being developed for Councillors and that for the purposes of the policy and management arrangements, they should be treated as employees. When finalised this would be sent to all Members and training sessions carried out.

In addition, Members commented on the set up of technical equipment in school classrooms. Officers advised this was not a corporate issue, but they were aware guidance and information had been sent to schools. It was recognised as a complex issue due to the number of different users within a school and Officers agreed to discuss Members' concerns with their colleagues from Health and Safety in the Education department.

Members of the Committee noted the contents of the report and agreed the corporate management arrangements, subject to the following amendments:

- Reference 6.4 of Policy – Members asked for a stronger policy regarding the need for an eye and eyesight test, with any decline by an officer to be recorded;
- Inclusion of a diagram illustrating the correct computer desk set up within the Corporate Management Arrangements;
- Amendment of a spelling mistake on page 21 of 35, Appendix 3, Minimum Requirements for a Workstation of the Corporate Management Arrangements; and
- Inclusion of a diagram illustrating the correct environment within Appendix 3, Minimum Requirements for a Workstation of the Corporate Management Arrangements.

6. DRAFT LATEX POLICY AND CORPORATE MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS FOR RISK ASSESSMENT

The report informed Members, Management and Trade Union Safety Representatives of the revised and updated Health and Safety Policy on the Use of Latex at Work and associated Corporate Management Arrangements. The draft document had received full consultation however due to the postponement of the Trade Union meeting in December, it would not receive direct Union consultation until Thursday, 8th January 2009.

Officers advised the existing policy has been updated to reflect the new format of a briefer, more concise policy covering commitment and responsibilities and separate corporate managements.

Members questioned the use of a material (latex) that was deemed to be dangerous. Officers advised the HSE requested a policy on its use and there were occasions where the use of latex was deemed to be beneficial, in comparison with alternative products. The policy would however only affect a relatively small number of staff.

Members of the Committee noted the contents of the report and agreed the corporate management arrangements.

7. DRAFT LONE WORKING POLICY

The report informed Members, Management and Trade Union Safety Representatives of the revised and updated Lone Working Policy and associated Corporate Management Arrangements. The existing policy has been updated to reflect the new format of a briefer, more concise policy covering commitment and responsibilities and separate corporate management arrangements.

Members discussed the draft policy and received confirmation that emergency numbers (as mentioned within Section 6.3, Managers with responsibilities for employees, within the draft policy) were programmed as speed dial numbers into officers' phones.

Members of the Committee noted the contents of the report and agreed the corporate management arrangements, subject to the following amendments:

- Reference 6.4 of Policy – Members asked that the last bullet point be amended to reflect that there was a responsibility to other people as well as the lone worker; and
- Reference 1.12.2 of the Corporate Management Arrangements be amended to ensure the employee advises their manager that work has stopped.

8. FUTURE MEETINGS DATES

These were confirmed as follows:

- 11th February at 2.00 p.m.
- 13th May at 10.00 a.m.
- 12th August at 10.00 a.m.
- 11th November at 10.00 a.m.

The meeting closed at 12.00 p.m.

Approved as a correct record, and subject to any amendments or corrections agreed and recorded in the minutes of the meeting held on 11th February 2009, they were signed by the Chairman.

CHAIRMAN