



CORPORATE HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT COUNCIL OFFICES, PENALLTA HOUSE ON WEDNESDAY, 12TH AUGUST 2009 AT 10.00 A.M.

PRESENT:

Councillor P.J. Bevan - Chairman
Councillor C. Hobbs - Vice-Chairman

Councillors:

Mrs A. Collins, D.T. Hardacre, A.G. Higgs

Together with:

E. Townsend (Health and Safety Manager), N. Barnett (Director of Corporate Services), G. Hardacre (Head of People Management and Development), M.S. Williams (Building Consultancy Manager), A. Williams (Assistant Director, Resourcing and Performance), R. Thomas (Committee Services Officer)

Trade Union Representatives:

M. Cusack (GMB), P. Jones (AMICUS), B. May (T&G), A. Morton (Unison), J.W. Poole (UCATT)

APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor A.J. Pritchard, B. Hopkins (Assistant Director, Planning and Strategy), S. Brassinne (UCATT), G. Enright (Unison), N. Funnell (GMB)

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

2. MINUTES

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Corporate Health and Safety Committee held on 13th May 2009 (minutes nos. 1 - 11, on page nos. 1 - 3) be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

3. MATTERS ARISING

Members were advised of the action taken by officers to address their concerns regarding the numbering of reports and appendices.

4. DRAFT CONTROL OF VIBRATION AT WORK POLICY AND CORPORATE MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS

The report informed Members, Management and Trade Union Safety Representatives of the new Control of Vibration Policy and associated Corporate Management Arrangements. The draft documents had received full consultation with the relevant groups, however consultation was still ongoing with the Directorate of the Environment.

Members were advised the documents would be referred to CMT and Cabinet for final approval, subject to approval from this committee and comments received from the Directorate of the Environment. Should any substantial amendments be requested, the documents would require re-consultation with union groups and this committee.

Members discussed the draft policy and received confirmation that where necessary an independent specialist measures the vibration levels of the authority's work equipment. Whilst it was impossible to eradicate all vibrating machinery, the policy aimed to take steps to reduce risk and safeguard staff. It was acknowledged that the employee themselves had a role to play and they had to inform managers immediately if they had any concerns.

Members of the Committee noted the contents of the report and agreed the corporate management arrangements, subject to possible comments from the Directorate of the Environment and the following amendments:

- additional statement to be added to confirm the authority's responsibility regarding contract workers;
- all references to appendices should be renumbered from 1, 2, 3 etc to A, B, C etc.

5. DRAFT REVISED AND UPDATED CORPORATE HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY

The report informed Members, Management and Trade Union Safety Representatives of the revised and updated Corporate Health and Safety Policy. The draft document had received full consultation with the relevant groups, however consultation was still ongoing with the Directorate of the Environment.

As this document is an update, subject to no issues being raised from the Directorate of the Environment it will be adopted and implemented. Should any substantial amendments be requested, the documents would require re-consultation with union groups and this committee.

Officers highlighted that paragraph 2.4 of the report detailed the main amendments to the document. Members asked that when requested to consider updated documents, that the original document remain and changes are highlighted; as per the 'track changes' facility available on most word systems. Officers agreed this would be done in future.

Members of the Committee noted the contents of the report and agreed the revised Corporate Health and Safety Policy, subject to possible comments from the Directorate of the Environment.

6. ELECTED MEMBER HEALTH AND SAFETY AWARENESS TRAINING

A copy of The Institution of Occupational Safety and Health's (IOSH) "Think about Health and Safety. What elected members of local authorities need to know" was circulated at the meeting.

The report informed Members, Management and Trade Union Safety Representatives of proposals to offer member 1-hour workshops to raise members' health and safety awareness. Officers suggested that the IOSH booklets are sent out to all members in September with briefing sessions taking place in October and November.

Members of the Committee discussed the report and suggested the training be made compulsory to all Members of the Council due to the seriousness of the subject. This was agreed. Officers confirmed that the training would be given by in-house staff who would be able to offer any clean up sessions for members, as and when required.

7. RECENT HSE ENFORCEMENT ACTION

The report informed Members, Management and Trade Union Safety Representatives of recent enforcement action taken by the HSE against Caerphilly County Borough Council.

Officers highlighted that the HSE had issued two immediate prohibition notices (dated 30th June and 20th July 2009) and an advisory letter to CCBC on 25th June 2009.

Members discussed the report and asked for further details regarding the circumstances and use of the company Shadow Scaffolding. Officers gave further information surrounding the prohibition notice and advised that Shadow Scaffolding had previously held a good Health and Safety record with the authority. Procurement were now in discussions with the company and the HSE had been advised when using their services in the future, additional inspections would be carried out.

Members questioned if there was a need for any additional training and/or contract amendments to clarify areas of responsibility, but officers considered this unnecessary at this time. In closing the Chairman and Vice-Chairman thanked officers for immediately notifying them of all HSE enforcement action and stressed the importance that this practice continue.

Members of the Committee noted the contents of the report.

8. ACCIDENT STATISTICS REPORT, APRIL - JUNE 2009

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 2009.

Members discussed the report and enquired about the relatively low number reported for the Directorate of Social Services. Officers confirmed a significant investment had been made to reduce the number of incidents in this area, and it had proved a great success. In addition officers clarified that the statistics presented covered those incidents that were non-reportable, causing over three days lost time or restricted duties, and major injury. Reports detailing day-to-day incidents were reported to the Health, Social Care and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee.

A member asked for an additional report to be brought before the committee in relation to slips/trips/falls of elderly clients within the Directorate of Social Services. Officers advised this type of information was reported regularly to the Health, Social Care and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee, as it was under that group's responsibility.

Members of the Committee noted the contents of the report and asked that Directorates be reminded of the need to report all accidents.

9. INFORMATION ITEMS

The following reports were received and noted:-

- (1) Corporate Health and Safety Group, minutes of meeting held on 13th July 2009 - The Committee noted the latest discussions that had taken place in the Corporate Health and Safety Group. Officers confirmed funds had been allocated to cover additional costs for the Statutory Maintenance Proposals.
- (2) Recent HSE Updates - The Committee noted the recent updates in Health and Safety information, advice and guidance. Members discussed the need for a review regarding medical procedures in schools. It was agreed the Health and Safety Manager would investigate the matter and bring forward a report to the next appropriate meeting; in addition members would request a detailed report be brought before the Education for Life Scrutiny Committee.
- (3) Health and Safety Audits - The Committee noted the information regarding recent audits carried out by the Corporate Health and Safety Unit between 1st April and 30th June 2009. Members were advised that all action plans had now been returned with the exception of 2 schools (where the Headteachers had retired).

10. EXEMPT ITEMS

Members considered the public interest test certificates from the Proper Officer and concluded that on balance the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighed the public interest in disclosing the information and it was: -

RESOLVED that in accordance with Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 the public be excluded from the remainder of the meeting because of the likely disclosure to them of exempt information as defined in paragraphs 14 & 16 of Part 4 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

11. ASBESTOS AND LEGIONELLA CONTRACT ISSUES

The report provided Members with an update regarding the authority's asbestos and legionella contracts.

The Committee noted the officer's report and welcomed further updates.

The meeting closed at 11:30 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 11th November 2009, they were signed by the Chairman.

CHAIRMAN