



CORPORATE HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT COUNCIL OFFICES, PENALLTA HOUSE ON MONDAY, 22ND NOVEMBER 2010 AT 10.00 A.M.

PRESENT:

Councillor P.J. Bevan – Chairman
Councillor Mrs A. Collins – Vice-Chairman

Councillors:

D.T. Hardacre, A.G. Higgs

Together with:

D. Jones (Acting Health and Safety Manager), K. Rogers (Senior Health and Safety Officer), N. Barnett (Director of Corporate Services), G. Hardacre (Head of Human Resources and Organisation Development), P. Gomer (Assistant Director, Community and Leisure), M.S. Williams (Head of Public Services), R. Hartshorn (Head of Public Protection), M. Williams (Building Consultancy Manager), D. Thomas (Lead Surveyor, Building Consultancy), D. Griffiths (Insurance & Risk Manager), R. Thomas (Committee Services Officer)

Trade Union Representatives:

S. Brassinne (UCATT), N. Funnell (GMB), P. Jones (AMICUS), A. Morton (UNISON)

APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors P.C.W. Bailie, A.J. Pritchard and G. Hughes together with trade union representatives B. May (T&G) and J.W. Poole (UCATT).

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 11th August 2010 (minutes nos. 1 - 14, on page nos. 1 - 5), be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

3. LEGIONELLA PRESENTATION

The Acting Health and Safety Manager gave a presentation on the control of legionella and Legionnaires Disease following the recent outbreak in the Heads of the Valley and subsequent requests for information.

The Head of Public Protection and Lead Surveyor were also present to respond to any questions from Members of the Committee.

Members were informed the disease could be contracted by inhaling legionella bacteria either in tiny droplets of water, or particles left after water has evaporated. The symptoms of, incubation period and susceptible parties to the disease were highlighted.

The Control of Legionella Bacteria in Water Systems - L8 (Third Edition 2000) is the approved Code of Practice and Guidance for the control of legionella bacteria in water systems and it sets out the statutory requirement for dealing with risk. Officers actions to prevent or control the risk were confirmed and an example of a risk assessment schematic given.

In closing, the officer detailed the quality checks undertaken and reviewed ongoing/completed remedial work as follows:

- Social Services – Programme of work completed
- Education and Leisure – Some schools with work outstanding. High risk works in leisure centers completed
- Sheltered Housing – Remedial works prioritised – work being undertaken by DLO
- Parks and Pavilions – Programme of work completed

The Head of Public Protection confirmed that during the recent outbreak, twenty-two cases of Legionnaires Disease were reported; together with a further ten unrelated cases. The normal average is thirteen cases per year.

The Chairman thanked the officers for the informative presentation and invited comments and questions from Members.

Members received confirmation that as Legionnaires Disease was still quite new (with the first case registered in 1976), more tests are being made available and reporting practices enhanced all the time. Generally outbreaks are found very quickly, however with the recent outbreak, it was possible there was more than one source (probably two) and it was spread around a large area. It was acknowledged that following the death of two members of the public, it was unsatisfactory that the source had not been established, however Members were assured that HSE officials from eight local authorities had worked hard on the outbreak's investigation.

The benefits of using plastic/fibreglass tanks (rather than metal ones that rust) was reiterated and Members were informed that preventative works and water systems upgrades across the county borough had started in 2007. Assurances were given that regular risk assessments and monitoring take place to limit any risk to staff and the public in the county borough.

4. PROPOSALS TO ADDRESS OUR HEALTH AND SAFETY STRUCTURE AND RESOURCES

The report updated Members on progress following a review of the Health and Safety arrangements and resources conducted by Dr Catherine Gill, an external consultant from the Authority's Risk Management Insurers (Marsh). Members' views were sought on some of the proposals outlined in the review and their operational impact.

The Head of Human Resources and Organisation Development introduced the report and highlighted the main recommendations and the merits of each of these. Members discussed the report and sought clarification on the potential for staff development and the date fixed term contracts will cease. Members also sought assurances that consultation with trade unions and staff had taken place. Officers advised open meetings had taken place on three occasions (twice with trade unions present) and all parties were broadly happy with the proposals.

The Corporate Health and Safety Committee noted the contents of the report and supported the proposals therein.

5. DRAFT EMPLOYEE WELL-BEING POLICY AND CORPORATE MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS

The report informed Members, Management and Trade Union Safety Representatives of the new Employee Well-being Policy and associated Corporate Management Arrangements.

Members were advised that the Authority currently has no formal policy to deal with well-being issues that arise due to work activities. The report and appendices form part of the existing Employee Well-Being Strategy and detail the approach of the Authority to minimise the risk and what actions will be taken when employees suffer from work related well-being issues.

Members were asked to note that since the draft Policy was circulated to the Committee, further consultation responses had been received from Social Services.

The Corporate Health and Safety Committee noted the contents of the report and endorsed the Policy and corporate management arrangements. The report, subject to amendments as appropriate from Social Services, will be presented to Cabinet for final approval.

6. RAMIS – STATUTORY MAINTENANCE COMPLIANCE

The report provided Members, Management and Trade Union Safety Representatives with an update regarding the implementation of the RAMIS (information management) system to cover statutory compliance issues relating to the Council's portfolio of buildings.

The population of statutory maintenance information onto the RAMIS system has commenced, starting with legionella and asbestos related data. It is envisaged that the majority of this will be uploaded by mid December and information relating to gas safety will be entered in January.

Reviews of the report writing and management dashboard elements of the system will be needed prior to the system going live. A trial of the system will commence soon and a demonstration of RAMIS will be presented to the Committee once completed. It is anticipated this will be in May.

The Corporate Health and Safety Committee noted the contents of the report and welcomed further updates, including a demonstration of the system, at future meetings.

7. SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS 2011

Members are asked to consider and agree dates for future meetings of the Corporate Health and Safety Committee.

All parties present agreed the following dates and times:

- Monday, 21st February 2011 at 10.00 a.m.;
- Monday, 23rd May 2011 at 10.00 a.m.;
- Monday, 15th August 2011 at 10.00 a.m.; and
- Monday, 21st November 2011 at 10.00 a.m.

8. INFORMATION ITEMS

The following reports were received and noted:-

- (1) Lord Young Review of Health and Safety – the report informed Members of the main findings and recommendations arising from Lord Young's report of the Whitehall-wide review of health and safety laws and the growth of the compensation culture. Members discussed and noted the contents of the report, and welcomed a presentation regarding the necessary procedure and advice given to third parties whom consider holding an event on the public highway.
- (2) Necessary Amendments to the Violence at Work Procedure – the report informed Members of recent updates to the violence at work procedure. Members discussed and noted the contents of the report.
- (3) Accident Statistics Report for Quarter July - September 2010 - the report informed Members of the numbers and types of work related accidents/incidents that occurred during the period of July to September 2010. Members noted the new reporting style, as detailed reports are presented to the appropriate Joint Consultative Committee. Members agreed individual incidents, for major injuries, will be reported to the Committee, if requested.

EXEMPT MATTERS

9. PUBLIC INTEREST TEST; ASBESTOS CASE – FACCIATA – LEGAL CLAIM

Members considered the public interest test certificate 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 meeting for the next agenda item because of the likely disclosure to them of exempt information as identified in paragraph 16 of Part 4 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

10. ASBESTOS CASE – FACCIATA – LEGAL CLAIM

The report informed Members, Management and Trade Union Safety Representatives on the proposed way forward in relation to the legal claim for alleged negligent surveys against a previous asbestos surveying contractor.

The Corporate Health and Safety Committee noted the report and supported the proposal by the Corporate Health and Safety Group.

11. PUBLIC INTEREST TEST; HSE INVOLVEMENT – FOCHRIW PRIMARY KITCHEN REFURBISHMENT PROJECT

Members considered the public interest test certificate 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 identified in paragraphs 12 and 14 of Part 4 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

12. HSE INVOLVEMENT – FOCHRIW PRIMARY KITCHEN REFURBISHMENT PROJECT

The report informed Members, Management and Trade Union Safety Representatives of an incident, and HSE involvement, at Fochriw Primary School's kitchen during its refurbishment in August 2010.

The Corporate Health and Safety Committee noted the report.

13. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting is to be held on Monday, 21st February 2011 at 10.00 a.m.

The meeting closed at 12.17 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 21st February 2011, they were signed by the Chairman.

CHAIRMAN