



CORPORATE HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT COUNCIL OFFICES, PENALLTA HOUSE ON MONDAY, 21ST FEBRUARY 2011 AT 10.00 A.M.

PRESENT:

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

Councillors:

D.T. Hardacre, A.J. Pritchard

Together with:

D. Jones (Health and Safety Manager), E. Townsend (Deputy Health and Safety Manager), G. Hardacre (Head of Human Resources and Organisation Development), K. Hughes (Fire Safety Officer), R. Thomas (Committee Services Officer)

Trade Union Representatives:

J.A. Roberts-Garcia (UNISON), N. Funnell (GMB), P. Jones (AMICUS), B. May (T&G), A. Morton (UNISON), J.W. Poole (UCATT)

CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman noted that this would be Mr Morton's last meeting of the Committee due to his forthcoming retirement. The Committee complimented Mr Morton on his scrutiny and hard work and wished him well in the future.

A welcome return was given to Mrs Townsend, following the conclusion of her maternity leave.

APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors P.C.W. Bailie, A.G. Higgs, G.J. Hughes, together with Trade Union representative S. Brassinne (UCATT) and officer N. Barnett (Director of Corporate Services).

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

2. MINUTES

RESOLVED that subject to the following amendment, the minutes of the Corporate Health and Safety Committee held on 22nd November 2011 (minutes nos. 1 - 13, on page nos. 1 - 5), be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

Accident Statistics Report for Quarter 2 (Minute reference 8(3))

The last sentence be revised to read “Members agreed individual incidents, for major injuries, will be reported to the Committee, as and when they occur.”

3. MATTERS ARISING

Draft Employee Well-Being Policy and Corporate Management Arrangements (Minute reference 5)

Members were informed that the Policy and Corporate Management Arrangements had been approved by Cabinet.

REPORTS OF OFFICERS

Consideration was given to the following reports.

4. FIRE RISK ASSESSMENTS PRESENTATION

The Fire Safety Officer gave a presentation on Fire Safety within council owned premises and improvements made since the initial fire risk assessments were carried out in 2005.

Members were informed of changes to legislation in the form of The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 and of the shift in the Authority’s responsibility. Risk Monitor completed initial Fire Risk Assessments from 2005 onwards, and these assessments are now being re-inspected using in-house staff. Health and Safety Officers inspect low/medium risk premises, while the Fire Safety Officer completes complex/higher risk premises. The re-inspection programme commenced in 2010 and is an ongoing rolling programme.

In total four Health and Safety Officers have been trained to complete this work, and the benefits of using CCBC staff rather than an external organisation was highlighted. In closing the presentation, the Committee were advised of new technology introduced to improve the service and how RAMIS (the online risk management system used by the Authority) allows officers to access all building data from a single access point.

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

Members welcomed the positive report and a full discussion followed. Members complimented the use of internal staff and acknowledged the better understanding and liaison this allowed with Building Managers. Officers confirmed the frequency of building re-inspections/checks undertaken and the responsibility of Building Managers and individual staff. It was highlighted that the South Wales Fire and Rescue Service were happy with the approach used by the Authority.

A Member raised a concern regarding the potential for fire to spread in ceiling voids and of the possible use of fire breaks to remedy this. Officers informed Members of the substantial cost to resolve this, and advised that in buildings without fire breaks in ceiling voids alternative high-grade fire detection equipment was installed instead. Officers stressed the emphasis was placed on life protection, while safeguarding of buildings and asset management were

secondary. It was also stated that early detection resulted in early attendance by the Fire Service reducing the extent of fire damage. The Authority's insurance companies have requested very few additional steps to be taken to reduce risk any further and premiums are reducing due to the work being carried out by officers. Additionally, with the assistance of RAMIS, claims can be easily defended.

A UNISON representative raised concerns that following the removal of asbestos, some girders have been left exposed and vulnerable if a fire occurred. He advised of a paint that could be applied to reduce their expansion during a fire. The Chairman asked officers to look into the use of this paint, if it was found to be cost effective. Officers agreed but reiterated that the aim was to save life not the building and that early detection and a quick response from the Fire Service was the main priority.

The Corporate Health and Safety Committee thanked officers for responding to their comments and welcomed the use and benefits of developing Health and Safety Officers.

5. WELL-BEING UPDATE

The report updated Members, Management and Trade Union Safety Representatives of the new Employee Well-being Policy, corporate management arrangement and associated policy briefing sessions and management training.

Since Cabinet approved the Policy and Corporate Management Arrangements on 11th January 2011, four half-day management-briefing sessions have been held. Uptake on these sessions was extremely high and feedback positive. Due to demand further briefing sessions are being held in April 2011. In addition to the Briefing Sessions, Care First, who run CCBC's advice, information and counselling service jointly delivered management training sessions tailored for the Authority, alongside Health and Safety staff. Feedback on the Training sessions has been positive, with further sessions planned.

Officers confirmed more staff attended the training sessions than had booked, and agreed to update the Committee on the exact attendee numbers at the next meeting.

The Corporate Health and Safety Committee noted the contents of the report and welcomed receipt of exact attendee figures.

6. HSE INVOLVEMENT

The report gave Members, Management and Trade Union Safety Representatives a formal update on HSE involvement with CCBC. This highlighted the Authority currently had one ongoing investigation, one planned inspection and a further possible investigation.

Officers reviewed each event and advised that due to the current status of both asbestos exposure incidents, greater discussion was not recommended. A meeting with the HSE will take place shortly to discuss Tŷ Sign Primary and a follow-up report will be provided to the next meeting of the Corporate Group.

Members raised concerns at the increasing number of asbestos exposure incidents and asked if there was a failure in the available surveys. Officers echoed this concern, reminding Members of issues with previous contractors and advised that the matter had discussed at a recent meeting of the Corporate Health and Safety Group. A paper will be brought to the Committee to discuss the outcome of this debate.

Trade Unions highlighted the need for greater contractor responsibility as a number of individuals had signed the logbook located at Tŷ Sign Primary to confirm that they had read the Management Asbestos Survey (type 2), but asbestos had then been omitted from the

Demolition and Refurbishment Survey (type 3). Following clarification of the types of survey, it was agreed to postpone further discussion on the incident, pending the outcome of the HSE investigation.

A Member asked if routine screening during the recruitment process of two employees had raised any concerns regarding Hand Arm Vibration Syndrome (HAVS); but officers advised at that time of employment checks were less vigorous. In addition to improvements to medical checks, job descriptions are also more robust now. It remains a priority to continue management of HAVS via training and monitoring.

The Corporate Health and Safety Committee noted the contents of the report and welcomed updates at future meetings of the Committee.

7. INFORMATION ITEMS

The following reports were received and noted:

- (1) Accident Statistics Report for Quarter 3 October - December 2010;
- (2) Recent HSE Updates;
- (3) Refuse and Cleansing Service – Inclement Weather Issues. It was agreed that a list of streets/roads assessed to be unsafe to use during periods of inclement weather would be sent Members. Officers asked Members to note that the list was at the discretion and expertise of the individual driver.

8. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting is to be held on Monday, 23rd May 2011 at 10.00 a.m.

The meeting closed at 10:58 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 Monday, 23rd May 2011, they were signed by the Chairman.

CHAIRMAN