



CORPORATE HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT COUNCIL OFFICES, PENALLTA HOUSE ON MONDAY, 15TH AUGUST 2011 AT 10.00 A.M.

PRESENT:

Councillor P.J. Bevan – Chairman

Councillors:

Mrs A. Collins, J.E. Fussell, A.G. Higgs

Together with:

E. Townsend (Deputy Health and Safety Manager), G. Hardacre (Head of Human Resources and Organisation Development), D. Griffiths (Insurance and Risk Manager), S. Ruddock (Senior Insurance and Risk Officer), V. Jenkins (Corporate Asbestos Officer), R. Phillips (Corporate Asbestos Officer), R. Thomas (Committee Services Officer)

Trade Union Representatives:

S. Brassinne (UCATT)

APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors P.C.W. Bailie, D.T. Hardacre, G.J. Hughes; Trade Union Representatives J. Roberts-Garcia (UNISON), P. Jones (AMICUS), B. May (T&G); and officers N. Barnett (Deputy Chief Executive), J. Rowe (Leisure Services Manager), M.S. Williams (Head of Public Services)

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

2. APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIRMAN

As a result of Councillor A.J. Pritchard withdrawing from the Committee following his appointment as Leader of the Council, Councillor J.E. Fussell was appointed Vice-Chairman of the meeting for the ensuing year.

3. MINUTES

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

- (1) Corporate Health and Safety Committee, held on 23rd May 2011 (minutes nos. 1 – 11, on page nos. 1 – 4); and
- (2) Special Corporate Health and Safety Committee, held on 1st June 2011 (minutes nos. 1 – 3, on page nos. 1 – 2).

4. MATTERS ARISING

Corporate Health and Safety Committee, held on 23rd May 2011

4.1 Statutory Compliance Software Update (Minute Item No. 6, Page 2)

It was confirmed the roll out of the RAMIS system had commenced in June and was on schedule.

4.2 Health and Safety Executive Involvement (Minute Item No. 9, Page 3)

Members were advised that although verbal agreement had been received from the HSE to extend notice compliance to the end of the year, this had yet to be confirmed in writing.

REPORTS OF OFFICERS

Consideration was given to the following reports.

5. PRESENTATION BY RISK MANAGEMENT – CIVIL CLAIMS HISTORY 10/11

The Senior Insurance and Risk Officer gave a presentation on the Authority's claim history and its accomplishments in establishing fraudulent claims.

Members were informed of the definition of fraud and the types of claims that were received by the Authority. Following the introduction of new claim handling procedures and through liaison with partners, the use of several databases and third party records, fraud detection had increased and the number of successful claims, significantly reduced. In total £17.6m had been saved and redirected to other services. The Authority also publicised these results in an effort to deter other fraudsters.

Members were asked to note that statistically 75% of claims made to the Authority were fraudulent, in comparison with the national average of between 60-80%. The Authority attempted to defend all potentially fraudulent cases and officers were working with neighbouring local authorities to identify patterns.

A leaflet was distributed to Members that was used to highlight the issues with fraudulent claims and asking for any known incidents to be reported to the council. Examples of fraudulent claims were given, together with the steps taken by the Authority in response to these.

In closing, officers advised of the continuing work undertaken to improve the robust system and of the need to constantly review the claim handling process.

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

Clarification was given as the approximate timescales involved in handling a claim and of the tools used by officers to assist them in their daily investigations. In addition, information was given regarding the defence of road pothole claims.

The Corporate Health and Safety Committee noted the contents of the presentation and support was given to the Risk Management Team. Additionally, a request to circulate the presentation to all Council Members was made.

6. PRESENTATION ON ASBESTOS MANAGEMENT – ESTABLISHMENT OF AN IN-HOUSE ASBESTOS TEAM

The report and accompanying presentation updated Members, Management and Trade Union Safety Representatives on recent developments in asbestos management.

In response to considerable quality issues with historic and recent asbestos surveys, a decision was taken to set up a new in-house team to carry out future asbestos management surveys. Two members of this team, Vernon Jenkins and Richard Phillips, were welcomed to the meeting, and their work experience detailed. Members were informed that in addition to Vernon and Richard, a system support officer was to start on Monday and recruitment was ongoing for a third asbestos officer.

The remit of the team was illustrated together with the extra value added, as officers would have a better rapport with Building Managers and an in-depth knowledge of the CCBC buildings. The team would also carry out immediate minor works if identified as necessary at time of survey. Members were advised, when the service becomes established and new management surveys on CCBC premises completed, there is the possibility of selling asbestos surveying and advisory services to neighbouring councils. Initially however, the team had a high workload with numerous mini-management surveys to complete (where work is required and a new survey has not been completed) as agreed with the HSE.

A risk prioritised action plan was also being developed for surveying of all outstanding CCBC premises and in the long term, it was anticipated that the team would become central to managing and controlling Asbestos Containing Materials (ACM's), with all activity relating to asbestos going through the team.

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

Members sought clarification as to the potential savings to the Authority by establishing an in-house asbestos team and asked for assurances that staff would not be exposed to potential risk, should their services be offered to third parties. The Insurance and Risk Manager confirmed the appropriate levels of insurance will be in place. Asbestos training was already provided to a neighbouring council and the arrangement works well.

Assurances were also given that the health of the asbestos team was paramount and regular health checks are carried out.

In closing, it was recognised that the Authority had faced numerous issues resulting from previous quality issues with Asbestos Surveys however the Authority has a robust plan to address the risk and to ensure that ACM's are well-managed going forward.

The Corporate Health and Safety Committee noted the contents of the report and gave their support to the Asbestos Team.

7. FIRE RISK ASSESSMENT REVIEW PROGRAMME

The report updated Members, Management and Trade Union Safety Representatives of updated frequencies of fire risk assessment reviews, following the decision to review assessments internally. Reviews for higher risk premises will remain contracted out, as will Fire Safety Audits.

Members thanked officers for the report and sought clarification as to the potential savings to the Authority and the definition of a high-risk building.

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

8. INFORMATION ITEMS

The following reports were received and noted:

- (1) Accident Statistics Report for Quarter 1 (April - June 2011). While not brought forward for discussion at the meeting, clarification was given in regard to the numbers of injures while handling, lifting or carrying in the Corporate Services Directorate.
- (2) Recent HSE Updates.

9. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

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

The meeting closed at 11.30 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 Monday, 21st November 2011, they were signed by the Chairman.

CHAIRMAN