



CORPORATE HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT COUNCIL OFFICES, PENALLTA HOUSE ON WEDNESDAY, 11TH AUGUST 2010 AT 10.00 A.M.

PRESENT:

Councillor P.J. Bevan - Chairman

Councillors:

A.J. Pritchard

Together with:

K. Rogers (Senior Health and Safety Officer), V. Jenkins (Corporate Asbestos Officer), N. Barnett (Director of Corporate Services), G. Hardacre (Head of People Management and Development), L. Donovan (Social Services Personnel Manager), P. Gomer (Assistant Director, Community and Leisure), M.S. Williams (Head of Public Services), R. Thomas (Committee Services Officer)

Trade Union Representatives:

S. Brassinne (UCATT), J.A. Roberts-Garcia (UNISON), N. Funnell (GMB), P. Jones (AMICUS), A. Morton (UNISON), T. Hearne (GMB), G. Osborne (GMB)

APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors P.C.W. Bailie, Mrs A. Collins and G. Hughes; together with trade union representatives J.W. Poole (UCATT) and B. May (T&G); and officer D. Jones (Acting Health and Safety Manager).

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 12th May 2010 (minutes nos. 1 - 8, on page nos. 1 - 3), be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

MATTERS ARISING

3. Asbestos Management (Minute No. 6)

Members requested an update on the Authority's compensation claim. Officers confirmed a meeting had recently taken place with the Authority's counsel. It was necessary to establish if the contractor had adequate professional indemnity insurance, and the matter remained ongoing.

In addition Members were advised further information regarding asbestos management would be presented during the appropriate agenda item.

4. Accident Statistics Report, January – March 2010 (Minute No. 7)

Members requested an update following previously raised concerns in regard to vehicles with tail lifts. Officers and Trade Union Members confirmed the issue had been discussed recently, at a number of meetings, and the matter was ongoing.

5. Health And Safety Audits (Minute No. 8(3))

Members were informed the RAMIS system remained in its infancy but had recently been updated with all local authority properties. A number of trials will soon be undertaken and additional data entered on a phased basis.

6. Corporate Health And Safety Group Minutes (Minute No. 8(4))

Members were advised health and safety officers are currently reviewing the best practices of other local authorities regarding the testing of employees for alcohol and drug misuse; prior to considering whether if it was feasible to bring forward a similar practice in Caerphilly CBC.

7. ASBESTOS MANAGEMENT – BRIEFING NOTE

A presentation was given to accompany the report that updated Members, Management and Trade Union Safety Representatives of the detailed arrangements that are in place with regards to asbestos survey requirements.

The Senior Health and Safety Officer and Corporate Asbestos Officer advised Members of the types of, possible locations/uses for asbestos and of the effects of asbestos-related diseases. The management of asbestos within the Authority's buildings and details on the differing types of asbestos surveys were also highlighted. In closing the officers detailed how remedial works and monitoring was carried out.

Members thanked the officers for the informative presentation and a full discussion followed. Clarification was given regarding the survey types and of the risk, and costs, involved in investigative and remedial works.

Members commented on the number of requests received for surveys to be carried out and the low proportion that actually identified asbestos containing materials, within the proposed work area. Officers confirmed requests came from a variety of sources and the number of requests quoted (629) was in addition to scheduled management surveys being undertaken. It was also noted that the number of Asbestos Containing Materials being identified are in addition to what has already been identified within the management survey for the premises.

Members asked if the cost of re-surveys on all the Authority's non-domestic premises will be covered by the insurance company involved in the outstanding compensation claim. Officers reiterated that until CCBC's counsel case conference took place, this could not be determined.

The Corporate Asbestos Officer reassured Members that premises constructed from the year 2000, will be asbestos free, but advised that many other buildings had asbestos present.

The vital role carried out by the Corporate Asbestos Officer was acknowledged and a request was made by a member, that he attend the committee on a regular basis.

The Corporate Health and Safety Committee noted the contents of the report and welcomed further updates.

8. ANNUAL ACCIDENT STATISTICS REPORT 2009 – 2010

The report informed Members, Management and Trade Union Safety Representatives of the numbers and types of work related accidents/incidents that occurred during the year April 2009 to March 2010.

Officers highlighted the top three accidents recorded (Slipped, tripped or fell on the same level; Injured whilst handling, lifting or carrying; and Physically assaulted by a person) and commented on the notable rise in accidents reported in 2007/08. Members were reminded that this corresponded with the launch of a new accident and incident reporting and investigation policy. It also coincided with the introduction of the electronic iCass accident recording system; meaning that records kept from this point are likely to be more accurate than they were previously.

Members discussed the report and a discussion followed, allowing officers to clarify the format of the statistical information and to confirm that the current trend suggests the number of accidents actually occurring is decreasing

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

9. RECENT HEAT STRESS COMPLAINT

The report informed Members, Management and Trade Union Safety Representatives of a recent complaint received and the action taken with regards to the working temperature on floor four of Penallta House.

Officers highlighted the advice given to employees working on the fourth floor and confirmed that under the Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations, there is no upper working temperature limit. The regulations do however refer to a 'reasonable' working temperature.

Members discussed the report and commented that the advice given appeared to be contradictory. Officer responded that as the building was not air conditioned, by opening windows and roof vents, warm air is dissipated and the building's ambient temperature reduced.

Members asked that consideration be given to the distribution of fans before the internal temperatures reach 28°C, as it was generally agreed that at this temperature, fans would be ineffective.

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

10. EMPLOYEE PSYCHOLOGICAL WELLBEING STRATEGY – BRIEFING NOTE

The report provided Members, Management and Trade Union Safety Representatives an update on the proposed way forward with regards to the management of 'work related stress', by highlighting the appropriate proactive and preventative arrangements to be considered.

The first draft of the psychological wellbeing policy and management arrangement has been discussed and approved at a recent meeting of the Corporate Health and Safety Group and will now proceed through the consultation process. A copy will be brought before the Committee to review, as part of this process.

Members discussed the report and sought clarification on the investigation of the causes of stress.

The Corporate Health and Safety Committee noted the contents of the report and welcomed sight of the draft policy and management arrangements.

11. INFORMATION ITEMS

The following reports were received and noted:-

- (1) Recent HSE Updates – the report informed Members of recent updates in Health and Safety information, advice and guidance. Members discussed the report and the Committee noted the recent updates in Health and Safety information, advice and guidance.
- (2) Accident Statistics Report for Quarter April - June 2010 – the report informed Members of the numbers and types of work related accidents/incidents that occurred during the period of April to June 2010. Officers highlighted that as a result of the number of injuries while handling, lifting or carrying, consideration was being given to reviewing the Authority's Corporate Guidance. Members noted the new reporting style, as detailed reports are presented to the appropriate Joint Consultative Committee. Members agreed, if necessary, individual incidents will be reported to the Committee on an 'as and when' basis.
- (3) Elected Members Health and Safety Presentation – the report updated Members on the recent training activities carried out for elected members. Members noted that attendance had been poor but that a further four training sessions had been planned from 14th October.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

12. Fire Evacuation

Following the discussion on Health and Safety training sessions, the meeting was briefly adjourned, as a result of a fire evacuation at Penallta House.

13. UNISON Health and Safety Sub-Committee

A member advised the Committee of the newly formed UNISON Health and Safety Sub-Committee that would allow the trade union to feed back directly to the Committee and help monitor policy in practice more effectively and to achieve common interests without competing.

14. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting is to be held on Wednesday, 10th November 2010 at 10.00 a.m.

The meeting closed at 11.20 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 10th November 2010, they were signed by the Chairman.

CHAIRMAN