



CORPORATE HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT COUNCIL OFFICES, PENALLTA HOUSE ON MONDAY, 18TH FEBRUARY 2013 AT 10.00 A.M.

PRESENT:

Councillor D. Havard – presiding Chairman

Councillors:

P.J. Bevan, D.T. Hardacre, S. Kent

Together with:

D. Jones (Health, Safety and Occupational Health Manager), E. Townsend (Deputy Manager (Specialist and Shared Services)), N. Barnett (Deputy Chief Executive), G. Hardacre (Head of HR and Organisation Development), A. Evans (Corporate Health and Safety Trainer), R.J. Thomas (Committee Services Officer)

Trade Union Representatives:

N. Funnell (GMB), G. Parr (UCATT), J. Roberts-Garcia (UNSION)

APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Mrs C. Forehead, A.G. Higgs, G.J. Hughes and Trade Union Representative S. Brassinne (UCATT)

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

2. MINUTES

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Corporate Health and Safety Committee held on 19th November 2012 (minutes nos. 1 - 8, on page nos. 1 - 4), be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

REPORTS OF OFFICERS

Consideration was given to the following reports.

3. HEALTH AND SAFETY TRAINING - PRESENTATION

Mrs Evans, Corporate Health and Safety Trainer, gave Members, Management and Trade Union Safety Representatives a presentation on Health and Safety Training within Caerphilly County Borough Council.

The Committee were informed of the aim to design and develop effective training interventions to ensure legal compliance, best practice and to enhance the skills and knowledge of CCBC employees and Members to help them to work and manage safely.

A review was given of the number, types and attendance levels of available courses for both internal customers and external local authorities. In particular Mrs Evans highlighted that accreditations were now available for UKATA, IOSH, EUSR, FPA and STA; and with a comprehensive internal training directory, the Authority received a bespoke training programme at a substantial cost saving.

The Chairman thanked the officer for the informative presentation and invited comments and questions from the Committee. The use of mandatory and voluntary training was discussed and officers confirmed that attendance at training sessions were now registered on the iTrent computer system for easier review, retrieval and liaison with other services. iTrent was also used as part of the health and safety audit system.

Officers and Trade Union Safety Representatives confirmed that unions were aware of available training courses, however a formal invitation was not offered as they had their own training facilities. Communication was good between all parties and availability of courses was well known.

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

4. RISK ASSESSMENT MANAGEMENT INFORMATION SYSTEM (RAMIS) UPDATE

The report informed Members, Management and Trade Union Safety Representatives on the progress of the implementation of Risk Assessment Management Information System (RAMIS) compliance and RAMIS asbestos.

The Health, Safety and Occupational Health Manager highlighted the main challenges and achievements since the procurement of RAMIS in 2006 and its subsequent implementation. Most recently this included the soft roll out of RAMIS asbestos to technical division, in September 2012; and the ongoing training of over 280 building managers / CCBC staff and 50 contractors in RAMIS compliance.

The use of RAMIS by schools and the levels of assistance offered to them, in particular in relation to CCBC's only foundation school, was discussed. Officers highlighted that governing bodies within schools were aware of their responsibilities, and the responsibility of the Authority, as dictated in law, was highlighted to the Committee.

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

5. GENERAL HEALTH, SAFETY AND OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH UPDATE

The report gave Members, Management and Trade Union Safety Representatives a formal update on Health, Safety and Occupational Health issues/investigations.

The Health, Safety and Occupational Health Manager confirmed the significant investment by the Council to manage asbestos through the recruitment of five specialist asbestos officers, and a £250k spend to deal with priority asbestos works, highlighted during asbestos surveys.

She also confirmed that following the collapse of a domestic rear garden party wall and subsequent HSE investigation, no further action was required in this case and no fees were levied against the Authority by the HSE for their involvement in responding to the incident. Members sought additional information regarding the ongoing implications of the incident and it was agreed that Mr Terry Shaw, Head of Engineering Services or another relevant officer, would be asked to attend the next appropriate meeting of the Committee to respond to their questions.

Mrs Jones then referred to the robust arrangements now in place in regard to equipment, risk assessments and screening arrangements to reduce cases of Hand Arm Vibration Syndrome. The Committee were asked to note that the majority of cases now brought forward were of a historical nature.

Concerns were expressed by some members of the Committee that some staff did not appear to use the necessary safety equipment when carrying out their duties. Officers advised significant work had been undertaken to ensure employees were aware of the risks and their responsibility to wear appropriate clothing.

Mrs Jones informed all parties that a full review of the Occupational Health Service was to be undertaken to ensure the delivery of a modern service to enhance wellbeing and attendance at work, and a report would be brought forward to the next meeting of the Committee.

Mrs Jones then advised that the Care First service was to be re-launched shortly and would include employment advice, legal advice, debt advice as well as counselling support. Members of the Committee highlighted the need for the service to be adequately promoted and for varied media to be used to help accomplish this.

Members of the Committee were informed that the launch of the Specsavers Eye Care Scheme on 1st November was successful and highlighted that approximately 70% of employees who attended had not had an eye test in the last two years (which is the recommended frequency). Future attendance would be monitored.

In closing, Members heard that while seasonal flu vaccinations were offered to Social Care staff again this year, take up was very low. This would be investigated, as many might be going directly to their GPs.

The Corporate Health and Safety Committee discussed the report and noted its contents.

6. UNION WORKPLACE STRESS SURVEY UPDATE

Mr Roberts-Garcia informed Members and Management of a joint union survey designed to identify the main causes of workplace stress and establish significant an issue stress was for the Council. A copy of the survey was distributed at the meeting for Members and Management to comment on its contents.

Mr Roberts-Garcia clarified that the survey had been approved by the unions (Unison, GMB, UCATT and Unite) and had been created due to a requirement by its members. A toolkit had been used to create the survey and this would be used to obtain a general feeling of the workforce. Unions were happy for the document to be sent as a joint survey with CCBC management.

Members and Management raised some concerns over the content of the survey and added that if it were tailored slightly, evidence gained using previous staff surveys could be used in conjunction with the survey results. Concerns were also raised with regard to the scoring, evaluation and analysis of the responses.

Members, Management and Trade Union Safety Representatives agreed to discuss the survey in more detail at a later date.

7. INOCULATION ARRANGEMENTS FOR FRONT LINE WORKERS

Mr Parr raised concerns at the reduced numbers of front line workers receiving inoculations, which were seen by many employees as an extra safeguard when carrying out their normal working practices.

Officers advised that as a result of current medical advice, inoculations were not considered to be the most effective preventative measure. They were only of use against certain infections, transmitted by blood, and as they were carried out on a voluntary basis, not all the workforce was covered. In addition, the injections could be intrusive and give the employee a false sense of security as immunity was not guaranteed.

Officers stressed that initially risk assessments were to be used to prevent contact and where there was an increased risk, an informed choice would be made as to whether inoculations were required. It was also highlighted that a standard tetanus injection was available via the general practitioner.

Management and Trade Union Safety Representatives agreed to discuss the matter in more detail after the meeting concluded.

8. VIOLENCE AT WORK REGISTER - UNION CONCERNS FOR DLO OPERATIVES

Mr Parr highlighted a number of concerns he and colleagues had experienced with the violence at work register and subsequent officer communication.

Officers confirmed that there had been earlier challenges, but these had been overcome in November 2012 and the system was now more robust and entries were corporately checked. Should any further instances occur, Mr Parr was to bring these to the Health and Safety Manager's attention.

Members, Management and Trade Union Safety Representatives agreed that a presentation on the Register be given to the Committee at the next appropriate meeting.

9. INFORMATION ITEMS

The following reports were received and noted:

- (1) Accident Statistics Report for Quarter 3, October – December 2012;
- (2) Recent HSE Updates.

10. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting is to be held on Monday, 17th June 2013 at 10.00 a.m.

The meeting closed at 11.45 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 17th June 2013, they were signed by the Chairman.

CHAIRMAN