



CORPORATE HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMITTEE

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT PENALLTA HOUSE, TREDOMEN,
ON MONDAY, 11TH NOVEMBER 2013 AT 10.00 A.M.**

PRESENT:

Councillor D. Havard-Chairman
Councillor S. Kent-Vice Chairman:

Councillors:

P.J. Bevan, Mrs. C. Forehead, D.T. Hardacre

Together with:

D. Perkins (Head of Legal and Democratic Services), L. Donovan (Human Resources Manager), D. Jones (Service Manager, Health, Safety and Welfare), P. James (Health and Safety Manager), R. Phillips (Asbestos Team Manager), M.S. Williams (Head of Community and Leisure Services), C. Evans (Committee Services Officer)

Trade Union Representatives:

N. Funnell (GMB), G. Parr (UCATT), J.A. Roberts-Garcia (UNISON) and D.A. Williams (UNITE).

APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence had been received from Councillors A.G. Higgs and G.J. Hughes; S. Brassinne (UCATT), K. Evans (Occupational Health Nurse Manager), G. Hardacre (Head of HR & Organisation Development), T. Phillips (Health and Safety Manager) and E. Townsend (Health and Safety Manager).

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

4. MINUTES-17TH FEBRUARY 2013

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Corporate Health and Safety Committee held on 17th February 2013 (minute nos. 1 - 11; page nos. 1 - 5), be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

REPORTS OF OFFICERS

Consideration was given to the following reports.

5. CARE FIRST PRESENTATION

The Committee received a presentation from Pat Garland-Smith from Care First, is a professional counselling, information and advice service offering support to Caerphilly CBC staff on issues arising from home or work.

It was noted that the service is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week and can be accessed live online, face to face, as well as on the telephone. The staff at the Care First centres are professionally trained and based within the borough. A Care First Vitality website is available to all staff and Councillors; this offers help, advice and support on healthy living options, such as dieting and personal training.

Members raised concerns regarding access to the Care First Service, in particular for manual workers, as they do not have access to the Internet, like office-based staff. Members were informed that a number of cards and leaflets have been provided at the depots and that the contact centres are available outside of regular working hours.

The Chairman thanked Pat for her informative presentation and the valuable services provided by Care First were recognised.

6. GENERAL HEALTH, SAFETY AND OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH UPDATE

The report updated the Committee on Health, Safety and Occupational Health issues and investigations.

Following the asbestos removal work at Cwmcarn High School, reassurance air samples have been taken at this site. A number of other schools, which were constructed around the same time and are of similar structure, have also undergone air sample tests, the results of which are pending. It was noted that there has been a change in legislation, which has resulted in the introduction of new acceptable air fibre levels. Members queried when the results of the air fibre tests would be available. Officers confirmed that the results for Cwmcarn High School were received on 17th October 2013 and levels are acceptable. It is anticipated that the results for the other schools will be available before Christmas.

Members were advised that Occupational Health is currently delivering a programme of inoculations against flu. Social Care and frontline staff are being offered the vaccine, and this year, Managers have been offered the vaccine for their staff for business continuity purposes. Members discussed the side effects of the flu vaccine and the belief that it caused illness. Officers advised that each year a particular strain of the virus is vaccinated against, however, it is hoped that a combination vaccination will be available next year, to prevent contracting the opposite strain.

Members raised concerns in relation to the Accident at Caerleon Amphitheatre, in which a pupil on a school trip suffered a major injury, which was reported to the Health and Safety Executive. Members discussed this incident and the importance of undertaking Risk Assessments prior to conducting school trips. Concerns were also raised that CADW may not have been displaying warnings at the site.

During the course of the meeting and at 11am, a two-minute silence was undertaken for Remembrance Day. Following the silence, the meeting resumed.

Members discussed the Police/HSE Investigation in which a contract worker, whilst undertaking asbestos works at Cwmcarn High School, was tragically found dead on site.

Police Investigations are underway into the incident and the Coroners' inquest into the circumstances of the death has been adjourned until 2014.

Members discussed the School Disaster Recovery/Education Continuity Plans. The Civil Contingencies Act 2004 highlights the responsibility of all public bodies to set in place emergency plans for the continuity of their services, which includes provision of statutory Education. Whilst provisions are in place to deal with fire drills, school closures and school visits, the most appropriate response to a critical incident will depend upon the circumstances. The incident at Cwmcarn High School has highlighted a requirement for provisions for longer-term closures. There is a pilot underway, with the cooperation of two Primary Schools and one Comprehensive School in order to introduce an Emergency Response Plan for each school, which would follow a standard format throughout the Authority. An in-depth discussion took place as to the impact on a child's education in incidents of fire damage and loss of schoolwork and records and members were advised that this is taken into account as part of the process.

The Committee noted the report.

8. SPECSAVERS UPDATE

The report provided an update on the Specsavers eye care voucher scheme. In November 2012 the Authority changed the way that eyesight examinations and associated eyewear are provided to Visual Display Users (VDU) and those requiring prescription safety eyewear. The new system, operated in conjunction with Specsavers Opticians, provides an eye care voucher scheme covering all aspects of eye care for employees at all levels. Members were asked to note that, to date, 395 VDU vouchers have been issued to staff, of which 221 are yet to be redeemed. Prescription Safety Glasses vouchers have been issued to 12 staff, of which all 12 are yet to be redeemed. Members were informed that this is a concern for the Authority as the vouchers are time bound and costly.

Members queried whether the system is able to identify the staff that have not redeemed the vouchers and whether there is any further action that can be taken. Officers confirmed that the system is still under development but that it is anticipated that the staff can be identified and highlighted to individual Managers. Further claims for vouchers will be suspended for these individuals in the future.

The Committee noted the contents of the report.

9. INFORMATION ITEMS

The following reports were received and noted:

1. Accident Statistics Report for Quarters 1 and 2 April - September 2013;
2. Recent HSE Updates.

The meeting closed at 11.29am.

Approved as a correct record and subject to any amendments or corrections agreed and recorded in the minutes of the meeting held on 17th February 2014, they were signed by the Chairman.

CHAIRMAN