



CORPORATE HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMITTEE

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT PENALLTA HOUSE, TREDOMEN ON MONDAY,
17TH FEBRUARY 2020 AT 10 A.M.**

PRESENT:

Councillor D. Havard (Chair)
Councillor S. Kent (Vice-Chair)

Councillors:

M. Adams and A G Higgs.

Councillor C. Gordon (Cabinet Member for Corporate Services).

Together with:

E. Townsend (Health and Safety Manager), R. Phillips (Asbestos Officer), A. Wigley (Principal Health and Safety Officer), J. Edwards (Service Manager – Children's Services), S. Richards (Head of Education, Planning and Strategy) and A. Dredge (Committee Services Officer).

Trade Union Representatives:

N. Funnell (GMB), L. Dallimore (UNISON) and A. Williams (UNITE).

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence had been received from Councillors P.J. Bevan, D. T. Hardacre and W. Williams, R. Edmunds (Corporate Director for Education and Corporate Services), L. Donovan (Head of People Services), M. Williams (Interim Head of Property Services) and D. Beecham (Electoral Services Manager).

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest received at the commencement or during the course of the meeting.

3. MINUTES – 24TH JUNE 2019

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Corporate Health and Safety Committee held on 24th June 2019 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

REPORTS OF OFFICERS

Consideration was given to the following reports.

4. UPDATED HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICIES

The Health and Safety Manager presented the report which provided Members with details of proposed minor updates to Health and Safety policies and sought Committee approval to implement the revised draft policies.

The Committee were advised that the Council has a number of policies in place, which set out the approach to managing key Health and Safety risks and a programme of policy review has recently commenced. Members were referred to paragraph 5 in the report which sets out the minor updates in relation to the following policies which were appended to the report:

- Corporate Health and Safety Policy (Appendix 1)
- Lone Working Policy (Appendix 2)
- Accident Reporting and Investigation Policy (Appendix 3)
- Risk Assessment Policy (Appendix 4)
- First Aid Policy (Appendix 5)

Emphasis was placed on the need to encourage near-miss reporting. Members noted that the updated policies will help to ensure that the Council is meeting its responsibilities under Health and Safety legislation and will assist in ensuring there is a robust framework in place to keep employees and others safe.

Representatives from Unison and GMB Trade Unions extended their gratitude to Officers for the highly welcomed communication whilst working together during the thorough process of consultation, in respect of updating the policies. In terms of raising policy awareness, the Officer explained that it is intended that staff briefings will be held in the Council Chamber in the next 4 – 6 weeks. Officers are looking to develop 'Team Talks' with an emphasis on communication, which is considered key. Posters will also be distributed encouraging staff to 'See it, Sort It and Report it'. The Trade Union Representatives offered their assistance in delivering this piece of work as they would like to ensure this is enforced throughout the workplace.

Following consideration and discussion, it was moved and seconded that the recommendation in the report be approved. By a show of hands this was unanimously agreed.

RESOLVED that the updated policies be approved.

5. LEGIONELLA MANAGEMENT POLICY

The Health and Safety Manager presented the report which sought the committee's approval of the draft policy in respect of Legionella Management prior to the report being referred to Cabinet for consideration.

It was noted that the Council has a number of policies setting out the approach to managing key health and safety risks. An electrical safety policy was introduced in December 2017 following HSE recommendations regarding the need for a policy setting out the Authority's commitment to and arrangement for managing electrical safety. Due to the similar high risk associated with legionella it was felt that a similar approach should be adopted and competent specialist advice was sought to assist with the development of a policy.

The Committee were advised that there are robust arrangements to manage water systems where there is a means of creating and transmitting breathable water droplets (aerosols), thus causing a reasonably foreseeable risk of exposure to legionella bacteria is fundamental to the safe and efficient operation of the Council's premises.

Legionella bacteria legionella pneumophila and related bacteria are found in natural water sources and may also be found on water systems such as cooling towers evaporative condensers, hot and cold water systems and spa pools. If conditions are favourable, the bacteria may grow. The risk increases with age however some people are at higher risk including people over 45 years of age. In addition to this category, smokers and heavy drinkers, people suffering with chronic, respiratory or kidney disease, people with diabetes, lung or heart disease, and anyone with an impaired immune system.

The draft policy details the role and responsibilities at all levels for managing the risks associated with legionella, including ensuring there is a risk assessment and written scheme in place and that appropriate checks are in place. It also sets out the practical measures which will be undertaken to control any risks identified.

In responding to a Member's question, the Officer advised that the Policy has been compiled based on external advice provided by a Contractor. In terms of action to control any risk, the details would be placed on the RAMIS (Risk Assessment Management Information System) and its progress would be monitored. It was also explained that there had been no outbreaks in the County Borough and if there were any concerns raised then external Contractor's advice would be sought, if necessary.

Following consideration and discussion, it was moved and seconded that the recommendations in the report be approved. By a show of hands this was unanimously agreed.

RESOLVED that for the reasons contained therein, the contents of the report are noted and the draft policy (Appendix 1) be approved and referred to Cabinet for consideration.

6. STATUTORY MAINTENANCE OF COUNCIL BUILDINGS

The Health and Safety Manager presented the report which sets out the current statutory maintenance compliance data for the four highest risk elements, namely electricity, gas, legionella and fire. It highlights the significant progress achieved and areas of concern. The report encompasses all Council buildings and housing together with external lighting and power installations where these are located on Council owned land. The report presents a position of continual improvement.

Members were advised that considerable effort continues to be focused on improving compliance and the safety of Council buildings and installations. Statutory Maintenance Group Meetings are held regularly and chaired by the Interim Head of Property Services. Positive progress is being made in all areas. Arrangements are also in place where there are cases of outstanding testing and remedials. The Committee were referred to paragraph 5 in the report which details the testing compliance within operational buildings and schools. They cover the quarter as of 31st October 2019 with the exception of Fire Risk Assessment tasks which are as of 13th January 2020. In all cases the corresponding data for 31st July 2019 is included.

The Committee discussed the statistics provided and were pleased to note the overall positive position. A Member referred to the WHQS programme and asked what the procedure would be in terms of gaining access to a property if this was denied. The Officer advised that if it was a gas test then advice would be sought from the Legal Department where court proceedings could be necessary. If access was required to undertake repairs, then Officers would look to further communicate and engage with the community. During the course of the debate, Members requested that an Officer from the Housing Department be invited to attend future Corporate Health and Safety Committee Meetings.

Following consideration and discussion, it was moved and seconded that the recommendation in the report be approved. By a show of hands this was unanimously agreed.

RESOLVED that the contents of the report be noted.

7. INFORMATION ITEMS

The Committee noted the following items for information, full details of which were included in the Officer's Reports:

1. Recent HSE Updates.
2. Accident Statistics for October - December 2019.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

A. Williams (Unite) addressed the Committee to express his concerns regarding access for staff at the Tir-y-Berth Depot. He advised the Committee that currently staff from Parks are using the same lock up to store their machinery as Refuse and Cleansing and this is causing congestion at the site. It was explained that there is one storage lock up on site which houses wheelie bins and Mr Williams suggested that the bins could be stored outside and for the Parks Department to use that lock up to store their machinery. He asked Officers to undertake a risk assessment at the site prior to further work commencing at the end of March and this was echoed by the other Trade Union Representatives in attendance. The Officer advised that he has met with Building Consultancy, Facilities Management and Parks and there is a supervisor for each area concerned. At this stage, this was considered a scoping exercise which could then be followed by a risk assessment being undertaken, if necessary.

Members requested that any other business to feature as an agenda item for future meetings of the Corporate Health and Safety Committee.

The meeting closed at 10:45 am.

Approved as a correct record and subject to any amendments or corrections agreed and recorded in the minutes of the meeting held on 16th November 2020, they were signed by the Chair.

CHAIR