

CORPORATE HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMITTEE

ABERDEEN, 27th May, 2009. - Minute of Meeting of the CORPORATE HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMITTEE. Present:- Councillor Leslie, Chairperson; and Rob Peaker (EIS), Vice-Chairperson. City Council Representatives:- Councillors Wendy Stuart and Young.

Trade Union Representatives:- Joe Craig (AMICUS); Lewis Smith (UCATT); Steve Robb (TGWU); Allan Gordon (UNISON); Sid Sandison (SSTA); and Neil Watson (GMB).

Officers in attendance:- Sue Bruce, Chief Executive; Allan Whyte, Head of Service, Neighbourhood Services (Central Area); Hugh Murdoch, Head of Service, Neighbourhood Services (North Area); Craig Stirrat, Head of Planning and Policy for Housing; Jacek Nowak, Head of Customer Relations Management; Susan Cooper, City Chamberlain; Karen Donnelly, Legal Manager (as substitute for City Solicitor); Gena Falconer, Health and Safety Manager; Mary Agnew, Principal Health and Safety Adviser; Graham Hossack, Operational Support Manager; Neil Yacamini, Operational Support Manager; Gillian Milne, Operational Support Manager; Jim Steven, Operational Support Manager; and Karen Riddoch, Committee Services Officer.

Also in Attendance:- Daniel Klienberg, Civil Servant, Scottish Government.

APOLOGIES

1. Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Councillor McDonald; Ewan Sutherland, Head of Human Resources; Norrie Steed, Head of Service, Neighbourhood Services (South Area); and David McCulloch and Mike Middleton, GMB.

MINUTE OF PREVIOUS MEETING

2. The Committee had before them for consideration, the minute of their previous meeting of 18th February, 2009.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) to amend the minute at Article 4(B), School Security, to include that Sid Sandison, SSTA had raised his concerns over the statement "that no serious incidents" had occurred;
- (ii) that the Chief Executive was to raise the issue of serious incidents within schools with the Corporate Director, Lead for Culture and Learning; and
- (iii) to otherwise approve the minute.

MATTERS ARISING

3. (A) Slips, Trips and Manual Handling

With reference to Article 4 of the previous minute, the Committee heard Neil Yacamini advise that (a) some services have provided an update to the Health and Safety Manager on what services were doing in relation to slips, trips and manual handling; and (b) a comprehensive report would be submitted to the next meeting of the Committee.

The Committee resolved:-

to instruct the Operational Support Managers to submit a comprehensive report on how Services were dealing with slips, trips and manual handling to the next meeting of the Committee.

(B) Safety Zones for Road Works

With reference to Article 6 of the previous minute, the Committee heard Hugh Murdoch advise that the white lining crew had been reminded of the importance of using signs whilst carrying out roadworks.

Mary Agnew asked if all ground and road crews had been informed of the importance of health and safety whilst carrying out roadworks.

The Committee resolved:-

that Mary Agnew be informed on whether all road and ground crews had been advised of the importance of health and safety whilst carrying out roadworks.

HEALTH AND SAFETY SERVICE UPDATES

4. The Committee had before them reports by the relevant Heads of Services providing an overview of health and safety activities within the following Services:-

- Environment and Infrastructure;
- Housing – Operational issues;
- Planning and Policy for Housing;
- Customer Relations Management;
- Central Procurement Unit;
- City Chamberlain;
- City Solicitor.

The reports (a) examined the health and safety activities within their Services and specifically how the Services managed health and safety; (b) reviewed current health and safety management to ensure it was consistent with current objectives for a healthier, safer workplace; (c) provided accident information (where applicable); (d) highlighted the current position with regard to health and safety training; (e) outlined issues identified in the workplace and how they had been resolved; and (f) detailed the rate of compliance with timescales for risk assessments and workplace inspections.

The Committee resolved:-

to note the contents of the reports.

HEALTH AND SAFETY SIX MONTHLY UPDATE REPORT – NOVEMBER 2008 TO APRIL 2009

5. With reference to Article 6 of the minute of meeting of this Committee of 28th May, 2008, the Committee had before them a report by the Corporate Director for Resources Management, which summarised the health and safety information submitted by Services for the period 1st November, 2008 to 30th April, 2009.

The report (a) advised that due to the planned restructuring of the Council, it was anticipated that a new corporate health and safety policy would be introduced in the summer of 2009, following which, each Service would be required to produce a service health and safety policy identifying the arrangements for managing health and safety; (b) expressed that there had been an improvement in the frequency rate of employee accidents for most Services; (c) stated that 535 employees had attended health and safety training courses over the period in question; (d) reminded Services that health and safety meetings were required under the Health and Safety (Consultation with Employees) Regulations 1996 and that it was important that during organisational change that meetings were still being held across all Services; (e) explained that it was important for all Services to complete a risk assessment register; (f) indicated that there was a deterioration in compliance with the basic health and safety requirements which made up the health and safety matrix; and (g) highlighted areas where the HSE had been involved.

The Committee noted (1) 35 personnel from Environment and Infrastructure had received certificates having been involved in RoSPA national safe driving awards; (2) attendance at health and safety training courses continued to increase; and (3) the Council had retained its RoSPA Gold Award for health and safety management.

The report recommended:-

that the Committee refer the report to the Resources Management Committee.

The Committee resolved:-

to approve the recommendation contained in the report.

CORPORATE HEALTH AND SAFETY UPDATE – JANUARY TO MARCH 2009

6. With reference to Article 6 of the minute of meeting of this Committee of 18th February, 2009, the Committee had before them a report by the Corporate Director for Resources Management, which provided details on the number and type of accidents, incidents and occurrences during the period January to March, 2009.

The report provided information broken down into the following categories:-

Accident/Incidents, Reportable Injuries and Accident Rates

The report provided statistical information relating to accidents and incidents over the period in question, those being:-

- 72 employee accidents were reported of which 15 were reportable to the enforcing authority;
- 35 accidents to third parties were reported of which 7 were reportable to the enforcing authority;
- 4 of the 7 reportable accidents to third parties were for sports injuries, relating to leisure activities;
- 13 incidents were reported by employees, which was less than half of the recorded figure from the last reporting period;
- manual handling, slips, trips and falls accounted for 60% of all reportable accidents to employees; and
- the accident rate for the period was calculated as 1.49 accidents per 1,000 employees.

Dangerous Occurrence

- there had been three new reportable dangerous gas occurrences relating to closable window vents being fitted on windows and a gas cooker being installed (not Council equipment) which did not meet the legislative requirements regarding flame supervision devices.

Accident Reporting

- on average 63% of completed F2508 accidents forms were taking more than the required 10 days from the date of the accident to reach the health and safety section;
- the figure had increased by 13.5% from the last reporting period.

Compliance Monitoring

- a total of 83 compliance visits were made during the reporting period on the themes of DSE assessment, school security and workplace health and safety meetings; and
- various areas for improvements were identified for Services.

Fire Risk Assessments

- a Health and Safety Adviser (Fire) would start with the Council on 1st June, 2009; and
- Grampian Fire and Rescue Services previously sent a letter detailing unsatisfactory standard of fire safety measures within a Council premises. A follow up visit to check on progress was also deemed unsatisfactory resulting in a three month extension to address the outstanding issues.

Health and Safety Training

- 104 delegates attended health and safety courses over the period in question.

Health and Safety Activities

- observations were raised concerning roadworks being undertaken by contractors employed by the Resources Development and Delivery Service whereby initial issues were addressed at the time;
- work had continued with assisting the archaeologists in the review of their risk assessments for work being undertaken at the Marischal College construction site;
- 2 health and safety advisers accompanied HSE inspectors on various visits to construction sites during March 2009 which focused on general

housekeeping, scaffolding, working at height and asbestos. The visits resulted in the HSE issuing a number of prohibition notices to various refurbishment construction sites; and

- noise and vibration continued to be monitored by the Vibration Review Group.

Health and Wellbeing

- no smoking day was publicised through the Employee Good Health Group and via partnership working with NHS Grampian. Information was provided on the zone for those people wanting to give up smoking. NHS Grampian staff manned display stands at various locations across the Council issuing packs to employees and gathering names for cessation classes.

List of Appendices

- Appendices 1 and 2 provided a full statistical analysis by Service and type of accident;
- Appendix 3, presented graphically, reportable and non-reportable accidents over the past year (April 08 to March 09);
- Appendix 4, provided the spread of incidents over the current quarter;
- Appendix 5, presented graphically, quarterly comparisons of incidents over the past year (April 08 to March 09); and
- Appendix 6, provided by Service, major and over 3-day employee accident rate for the current period.

The report recommended:-

that the Committee refer the report to the Corporate Management Team:-

- (a) for discussion and to encourage Heads of Service to keep their respective statistics under review;
- (b) to consider progress towards achieving targets for the reduction of accidents and work related ill health in line with the Health and Safety commissions targets; and
- (c) for dissemination and action on the included health and safety information.

The Committee resolved:-

to approve the recommendations contained in the report.

OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH – QUARTERLY REPORT – JANUARY TO MARCH 2009

7. With reference to Article 7 of the minute of meeting of this Committee of 18th February, 2009, the Committee had before them a report by the Corporate Director for Resources Management which provided an update on the occupational health referrals and outcomes for the period January to March 2009.

The report advised that (a) 193 appointments were delivered by SERCO Occupational Health on behalf of the Council which comprised 13 medicals and 180 referrals; (b) 40 people did not attend scheduled appointments with a further 7 cancelling at short notice; (c) SERCO had commenced the Hand Arm Vibration Syndrome Surveillance Programme, the results of which would be included in the

second quarterly report; and (d) 66% of referrals received were for long-term sickness absence of which 64% were deemed fit to return to work.

The report provided a breakdown of diagnoses given for the referrals which included musculoskeletal, mental health, cardiovascular, and gastrointestinal.

The Committee resolved:-

to note the content of the report.

HEALTH AND SAFETY ACTION PLAN

8. With reference to Article 8 of the minute of meeting of this Committee of 18th February, 2009, the Committee had before them for information the latest position statement of the corporate health and safety action plan prepared by the Principal Health and Safety Adviser.

Mary Agnew advised that the corporate asbestos policy would be presented to the relevant Committee after the restructure in August or September 2009.

The Committee resolved:-

to note the information.

ACTION PLAN FOR NORTHFIELD ACADEMY – PROGRESS REPORT

9. With reference to Article 5 of the minute of meeting of this Committee of 18th February, 2009, the Committee had before them a report by the Corporate Director, Strategic Lead for Culture and Learning, which was submitted to the Area North Committee on 25th May, 2009 and provided an update on the progress made with the action plan for Northfield Academy.

The report advised that (a) the Action Plan for Northfield Academy was approved by the Policy and Strategy (Education) Committee on 4th March, 2008, with funding being allocated by the Resources Management Committee on 22nd April, 2008; (b) the school had reached a crisis point due to persistent levels of unacceptable pupil behaviour, poor pupil performance and low staff morale; (c) the action plan was produced to address the issues with a view to transforming Northfield Academy into a successful school and a vital part of the regeneration of the Northfield Area; and (d) four main themes had been identified following discussions with staff, parents, pupils and the Council, those being:-

- Better Behaviour – unacceptable and disruptive pupil behaviour must be dealt with to ensure the school can focus on improvements in learning and teaching;
- Better Learning – better quality teaching and learning will enable pupils to maximise their achievements;
- Staffing Issues – filling long term vacancies and improving staff morale are key to improving the school; and
- A Successful School – transforming the school into one where achievement and success are recognised and celebrated.

The report provided information on the measures put in place to improve the situation at the school whether as immediate actions or as long term sustainable actions. Officers were to work with the school to prepare an evaluation by the end of the school session on the impact of the actions taken and to identify sustainability issues and good practice that could be shared with other schools.

The report concluded that significant progress had been made at the school over the last 18 months, which was supported by investment and commitment from the Council, hard work and dedication from staff and the wider involvement of pupils, parents and the community. There were still some remaining issues which would require long term sustained action to secure the level of improvement that was desired for the school and the community.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) to note that the Area Committee North on 25th May referred the report to the Policy and Strategy (Education) Committee on 9th June, 2009 to highlight as a good news story;
- (ii) to otherwise note the content of the report.

OLDMACHAR ACADEMY HEATING AND VENTILATION SYSTEM – ISSUES

10. The Committee had before them (1) correspondence from Rob Peaker (EIS) which outlined problems with the Old Machar Academy heating and ventilation system; (2) a document which provided a summary of the actions taken on particular dates from July 2007 to April 2009; and (3) minutes of the Culture and Learning Health and Safety Committee, Neighbourhood Services (North Area) minute of 18th February, 2009 and 5th May, 2009 which contained information relating to the problems at Oldmachar Academy.

The correspondence advised that (a) the school had had serious problems with the system for many years resulting in rooms getting no heat or too much heat; (b) the school management had followed the correct procedures in relation to health and safety whilst requesting a survey of the workings of the system; (c) the summary document outlined the attempts to assess the problems and the associated delays; (d) an initial survey had been undertaken however no improvements had been made to date; (e) several rooms within the school remained unusable at times with the main exam rooms being extremely hot; and (f) it was not acceptable for a large successful school to be left with a malfunctioning heating and ventilation system that meant health and safety regulations on temperature and humidity were being breached on a regular basis.

Rob Peaker explained that since submitting the item for the Committee to discuss, an independent survey had been carried out on 22nd May, 2009, which highlighted three options for improvement which management needed to discuss and agree the way forward. Allan Whyte, Head of Service, Neighbourhood Services (Central Area), stated that a report would be submitted to the Resources Management Committee which would identify the option available for improving the situation at the school.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) that Councillor Leslie be kept informed on the progress of the situation at the school; and
- (ii) to otherwise note the information.

FIRE ALARM ACTIVATIONS IN SCHOOLS

11. The Committee had before them an item raised by Steve Robb, TGWU Convener which identified an issue that had been raised during a recent investigation relating to fire alarms and evacuation procedures in a school that had caused great concern.

The Committee noted the concerns raised by Steve Robb and discussed the best way to inform all Council establishments on the importance of following the agreed fire evacuation procedures.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) that a statement be issued from the Office of Chief Executive, to all Council owned establishments advising that “where fire alarms had been activated outwith the normal testing times, that the agreed evacuation procedures and plans for that establishment are to be followed at all times and that under no circumstances should fire alarm panels be deactivated; and
- (ii) to otherwise note the information.

WORKLOAD MANAGEMENT

12. With reference to Article 12 of the minute of meeting of this Committee of 29th August, 2008, the Committee heard Rob Peaker advise that he felt there was a need to reissue the advice on workload management concerns to all staff to remind them that concerns should be reported to their line managers. Rob explained that the original document would need to be amended slightly before reissued and that the information should be highlighted on the zone.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) that the Operational Support Managers ensure that the workload statement is discussed at the next available Union Management Committee;
- (ii) that the workload management statement be reissued to staff as a reminder; and
- (iii) to otherwise note the information.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

13. It was noted that the next meeting of the Committee had been scheduled for Wednesday, 26th August, 2009.

- GORDON LESLIE, Chairperson.