

CORPORATE HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMITTEE

ABERDEEN, 25th November, 2009. - Minute of Meeting of the CORPORATE HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMITTEE. Present:- Councillor Leslie, Chairperson; and Rob Peaker (EIS), Vice-Chairperson. City Council Representative:- Councillor McDonald.

Trade Union Representatives:- Sid Sandison (SSTA); John Noble (UCATT); Steve Robb (UNITE-TGWU); and David McCulloch and Neil Watson (GMB).

Officers in attendance:- Stewart Carruth, Director of Corporate Governance (for item 1); Ciaran Monaghan, Head of Service; Gena Falconer, Health and Safety Manager; Mary Agnew, Principal Health and Safety Advisor; Neil Yacamini, Operational Support Manager; Gillian Milne, Operational Support Manager; Jim Stephen, Operational Support Manager; George Cruickshank, Operational Support Manager; Andy Brown, Admin Officer (substituting for Graham Hossack); and Karen Riddoch, Committee Services Officer (Clerk).

Also in Attendance:- David Smith and Bavaneesha Niodoo from Employee Advisory Resource Limited.

EMPLOYEE ADVISORY RESOURCE LIMITED – PRESENTATION

1. The Committee received a presentation from David Smith and Bavaneesha Niodoo from Employee Advisory Resource Limited which provided members with details on the new Employee Advisory Service.

Mr Smith and Ms Niodoo (a) outlined the structure and background to their company; (b) highlighted the functions of the Employee Advisory Service which included the Information Service and Counselling Service provisions; (c) summarised the key benefits for the Council; (d) explained the types of issues that they may deal with whether work related or personal; and (e) provided contact details for accessing the Service.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) to thank Ms Niodoo and Mr Smith for attending the meeting and providing the Committee with detailed information on the new Employee Advisory Service; and
- (ii) to note the content of the presentation.

At this juncture in the proceedings, the Chairperson announced that the meeting was not quorate, and called for an adjournment of the meeting until 10.30am to allow elected members to be present.

APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRPERSON AND VICE-CHAIRPERSON

2. The Clerk advised that in terms of the Constitution of the Committee, the Committee were required to consider the appointment of Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson, and intimated it was customary for the positions to be filled alternately by elected members and trade union representatives on an annual basis, and that it was the turn of the trade union representatives to appoint a Chairperson and the elected members to appoint a Vice-Chairperson from within their respective members. The Clerk then called for nominations for the position of Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson.

David McCulloch (GMB) moved, seconded by John Noble (UCATT), that Rob Peaker (EIS) be appointed as Chairperson.

There were no further nominations.

Rob Peaker proceeded to take the Chair.

Councillor McDonald moved, seconded by Rob Peaker (EIS), that Councillor Leslie be appointed as Vice-Chairperson.

There were no further nominations.

The Committee resolved:-

that Rob Peaker (EIS) be appointed as Chairperson and Councillor Leslie be appointed as Vice-Chairperson of the Committee.

CHAIRPERSON ANNOUNCEMENT

3. The Chairperson announced that he was disappointed with the turnout of people in attendance for the launch of the new employee advisory service (Article 1) and intimated that a letter addressing his disappointment be sent to the Chief Executive.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) that Ciaran Monaghan would raise the issue with the Chief Executive;
- (ii) that the Chairperson, in consultation with other trade unions, would draft a letter to the Chief Executive expressing the disappointment on the turnout for the Employee Advisory Service launch.

APOLOGIES

4. Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Ewan Sutherland, Graham Hossack, Joe Craig (UNITE) and Mike Middleton (GMB).

MINUTE OF PREVIOUS MEETING

5. The Committee had before them for consideration, the minute of their previous meeting of 27th May, 2009.

The Committee resolved:-

to approve the minute.

MATTERS ARISING

6. (A) Serious Incidents within Schools

With reference to Article 2, resolutions (i) and (ii) of the minute of its meeting of 27th May, 2009, the Committee heard Jim Stephen advise that (a) a meeting of the School Security Group was held in March, 2009; (b) a further meeting was to be scheduled for the Group in 2009 wherein tasks would be allocated to representatives on the Group to spread the workload; and (c) the Group would consider policy and procedures, revisit compliance monitoring on school security, consider door entry systems and gather statistics on unauthorised intruders into schools and playgrounds.

During the discussion that followed, it was noted that nominations for representatives of the School Security Group would be welcome as long as the numbers were not excessive.

The Committee resolved:-

to note the information.

(B) Slips, Trips and Manual Handling

With reference to Article 3(A) of the minute of its meeting of 27th May, 2009, the Committee had before them a joint report prepared by the Operational Support Managers, which provided an update on the actions undertaken by Services in relation to slips, trips, falls and manual handling.

The report (a) advised that all establishments were required to undertake risk assessments which should be recorded with outcomes communicated with employees and follow up assessments undertaken; (b) indicated that in addition to general risk assessments, separate manual handling risk assessment guidance was available and where appropriate risk assessments in this area should be carried out as well as the general risk assessments; (c) outlined the percentage of risk assessments, manual handling risk assessments, and slips trips and falls risk assessments that had been carried out in each Service; (d) explained that manual handling, slips, trips and falls risk assessments were not currently reported separately for Social Care and Wellbeing or Housing and Environment Services as they form part of the generic risk assessment reporting; (e) highlighted the number of employees who had undertaken health and safety training in the period 1st April, 2008 to 31st March, 2009; (f) indicated that the importance of manual handling, slips, trips and falls had been raised with posters being displayed on noticeboards throughout Council premises and that some Services issued regular health and safety bulletins to staff which contained general reminders to staff relating to health and safety issues.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) that Services seek guidance from their designated Health and Safety Adviser in relation to completing risk assessments for manual handling, slips and trips; and
- (ii) to otherwise note the report.

(C) Old Machar Academy Heating and Ventilation Systems

With reference to Article 10 of the minute of its meeting of 27th May, 2009, the Committee heard Jim Stephen advise that a capital bid for the remedial work required at the school was being prepared for the 2010/2011 programme.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) that an update be provided to the future meeting of the Committee; and
- (ii) to otherwise note the information.

CONSTITUTION – PROPOSED AMENDMENTS

7. The Committee had before them (1) a copy of the current Constitution; and (2) a paper prepared by the Clerk which outlined proposed changes to the Constitution of the Committee, those being:-

- 1 - Reporting Route - the Committee would submit copies of its minutes to the Finance and Resources Committee;
- 3.1 – Membership, Elected Members - the membership of the Committee would be five elected members, one to be the convener of the Finance and Resources Committee;
- 3.3 – Membership, Officers - to add “acting in an advisory role” after officers;
- 5 Quorum – the quorum for the Committee would consist of five members, comprising two elected members and three trade union representatives;
- 8 Variation to the Constitution – that the Constitution may be varied or modified by agreement between Elected Members, Council representatives and Trade Union representatives on the Committee.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) to instruct the Clerk to make the abovementioned changes to the Constitution; and
- (ii) to otherwise note the information.

SAFETY REPRESENTATIVES AND SAFETY COMMITTEES REGULATIONS 1977 – GUIDANCE DOCUMENT

8. The Committee had before them a copy of the Safety Representatives and Safety Committee Regulations 1977. The document contained information on the appointment, role and responsibilities for safety representatives and provided the objectives and functions of health and safety committees. The document was

before the Committee to remind them of the role of the safety representatives and safety committees.

The Committee resolved:-

to note the regulation document.

HEALTH AND SAFETY ANNUAL REPORT APRIL 2008 TO MARCH 2009

9. The Committee had before them a report by the Director for Corporate Governance which summarised health and safety activities in the Council for the period April 2008 to March 2009 which had been presented to the Finance and Resources Committee on 12th November, 2009.

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

Reportable Accident/Incidents and Accident Rates

The report provided statistical information relating to reportable accidents and incidents, those being:-

- there were 74 employee reportable accidents;
- slips, trips and falls had increased from 21 to 30, accounting for 41% of the total number of employee reportable accidents;
- manual handling incidents had decreased from 19 to 17 accounting for 23% of the total number of employee reportable accidents;
- struck by object had increased from 7 to 10 making this the third largest category for reportable accidents;
- there were 27 third party reportable accidents, the majority of which were attributed to sports injuries, this was a decrease of 70% from the previous period; and
- the accident rate per 1000 employees had increased slightly to 6.44.

Hand Arm Vibration Syndrome (HAVS)

- during the last 12 months, there had been no new cases of HAVS reported;
- the total number of employees currently undergoing health surveillance for HAVS was 425;
- the Vibration Review Group had been established to meet on a monthly basis to assist in the effective and consistent management of HAVS across the Council.

Revitalising Health and Safety Initiative: Targets for 2010

- 3 national targets were set by the Health and Safety Executive in 2000 to improve health and safety performance by 2010, those being:-
 - to reduce the incidence rate of fatalities and major injuries by 10% whereby the Council had a reduction of 26% over the reporting period
 - to reduce the incidence rate of cases of work-related ill health by 20% whereby the Council had a reduction of 50% over the reporting period
 - to reduce the number of working days lost per worker from work related injury and ill health by 30% whereby the Council had a reduction of 100% over the reporting period.

RoSPA Gold Award

- the proactive approach of the Health and Safety Team had been rewarded with a second Gold Award by the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA) for 2008/09.

The report highlighted key projects for 2009/10 that the Health and Safety Team would be working on.

The Committee resolved:-
to note the report.

CORPORATE HEALTH AND SAFETY REPORT, APRIL TO SEPTEMBER 2009

10. With reference to Article 6 of the minute of its meeting of 27th May, 2009, the Committee had before them a report by the Director for Corporate Governance, which provided details on the number and type of accidents, incidents and occurrences during the period April to September, 2009.

The report provided information broken down in 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:-

- 46 employee accidents were reported of which 19 were reportable to the enforcing authority for April to June;
- 41 employee accidents of which 15 were reportable to the enforcing authority for July to September;
- 35 accidents to third parties were reported of which 10 were reportable to the enforcing authority for April to June;
- 26 accidents to third parties were reported of which 13 were reportable to the enforcing authority for July to September;
- 10 incidents were reported by employees for the period April to June and 11 for the period July to September;
- manual handling, slips, trips and falls accounted for 68% of all reportable accidents to employees for April to June and 38% for July to September; and
- the accident rate for the period April to June was 2.01 and for July to September was 1.55 accidents per 1,000 employees.

Dangerous Gas Occurrence

- there had been one dangerous gas occurrence relating to the accidental release of mercury
- there had been eight instances of dangerous gas fittings wherein checks on vacant properties had identified uncapped gas pipework following removal of gas equipment by vacating tenants.

Compliance Monitoring

- a total of 201 compliance visits were made during the reporting period on the themes of manual handling, vehicle driving and maintenance checks, accident prevention and reoccurrence, COSHH and local exhaust ventilation and maintenance arrangements; and
- various areas for improvements were identified for Services.

Health and Safety Training

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

The report recommended:-

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

- (a) to discuss and encourage review of statistics by heads of service;
- (b) to support actions to reduce actions and work related ill health in line with the Health and Safety Commissions revitalising health and safety target; and
- (c) to disseminate an action on the included health and safety information.

The Committee resolved:-

to approve the recommendations contained in the report.

OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH REPORTS APRIL TO JUNE 2009 AND JULY TO SEPTEMBER 2009

11. With reference to Article 7 of its minute of meeting of 27th May, 2009, the Committee had before it reports prepared by Serco which provided an update on the occupational health referrals and actions for the period April to June 2009 and July to September 2009.

The reports provided information on the number of appointments and cancelled appointments, those being:-

1st April to 20th June, 2009

- 227 appointments were delivered by Serco on behalf of the Council
- 6 of these were medicals and 221 were referrals
- 23 people did not attend with a further 6 cancelling within 24 hours of their appointment and 4 giving more than 24 hours notice
- 212 HAVS assessments were carried out

1st July to 30th September, 2009

- 169 appointments were delivered by Serco on behalf of the Council
- 5 of these were medicals and 164 were referrals
- 14 people did not attend with a further 1 cancelling within 24 hours of their appointment and 1 giving more than 24 hours notice
- 212 HAVS assessments were carried out

The Committee resolved:-

to note the reports.

CORPORATE HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY

12. The Committee had before it a draft copy of the revised Corporate Health and Safety Policy for comment and information. The Committee heard Gena Falconer advise that (1) the policy document was the overarching policy for all health and safety matters; (2) the current practice was for the document to be updated on an annual basis, however due to the re-structuring of the Council Services, the document had been revised earlier to take into account the new Services; and (3) the agreed

policy stressed in section 2 that Aberdeen City Council would always strive to go further than the minimum standard.

The Committee resolved:-

to note the content of the document.

HEALTH AND SAFETY ACTION PLAN

13. With reference to Article 8 of its minute of meeting of 27th May 2009, the Committee had before it 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 was still outstanding and that she had met with the relevant Service whereby she had assurances that it would be completed by June 2010.

Rob Peaker stated that he was pleased that Health and Safety links to Marischal College and the 3Rs Projects had been established and that these should be maintained and reported upon.

The Committee resolved:-

to note the information.

FIRE INCIDENT

14. With reference to Article 11 of its minute of meeting of 27th May, 2009, the Committee heard Gena Falconer advise that she had been informed of an incident whereby a fire alarm was not activated properly within a school as the person in question didn't follow the correct fire alarm procedure. The abovementioned incident occurred after the instruction from the Chief Executive to all establishments, to always follow the established fire procedures for that building.

The Committee resolved:-

to note the information.

FUTURE SERVICE AND PROJECT REPORTS

15. The Committee heard Gena Falconer advise that it was important for Services to provide a summary of all health and safety activities within their Service to this Committee on a regular basis. In the past each Head of Service provided a report on a rota basis to the Committee relating to their area of responsibility. Due to the restructuring of Services, these reports had been postponed until a suitable reporting arrangement was agreed.

The options discussed were (1) for each Director to report on an annual basis for their Service or (2) for each Head of Service, once appointed, provide a report for their area of responsibility on an annual basis.

The Committee resolved:-

(i) that Heads of Service report to the Committee on an annual basis;

- (ii) that the reports provided be scheduled on a Directorate basis;
- (iii) that Project Directors for major projects be asked to report;
- (iv) that the Health and Safety Manager liaise with the Clerk to produce a reporting timetable; and
- (v) to otherwise note the information.

WORKLOAD MANAGEMENT

16. With reference to Article 12 of its minute of meeting of 27th May 2009, the Committee had circulated a draft statement relating to workload, prepared by Rob Peaker, EIS. The paper contained a broad statement on workload issues which would be circulated to all employees. Rob advised that the paper had been drawn up in consultation with Gena Falconer, Health and Safety Manager. The final version of the paper would contain the logos for the Council and all Trade Unions and would be signed off by the Chief Executive.

Gena Falconer asked that feedback be provided on the content of the statement.

The Committee resolved:-
to note the information.

SERVICE REFERRALS

17. With reference to the minute of meeting of the Corporate Governance Union Management Committee of 28th September 2009, the Committee had before it the minute extract relating to Repairs Request Procedure, wherein it contained a paragraph asking that the Corporate Health and Safety Committee be asked to (1) consider the corporate issues of safe pedestrian access to the Aberdeen Exhibition and Conference Centre (AECC) and whether current pedestrian and traffic flows justified reconsideration of the provision of pedestrian access and (2) also consider whether it would be feasible to provide lighting at the Council's designated car park at the AECC.

The Committee resolved:-
that the Director for Enterprise, Planning and Infrastructure would investigate the issues.

UNION MANAGEMENT COMMITTEES – MINUTES

18. The Committee had before it, for information, minutes from each Service Union Management Committee relating to Health and Safety issues.

The Committee resolved:-
to note the minutes.

MEETING DATES 2010

19. The Committee had before it proposed meeting dates for the Committee for 2010. The Committee heard the Clerk advise that since issuing the agenda for this

meeting, the February date now clashed with the Appointment Panel for the Head of Service Recruitment and would require to be changed.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) to instruct the Clerk to re-schedule the meeting date in February 2010; and
- (ii) to otherwise agree the meeting dates as follows:
 - Wednesday 12th May 2010
 - Wednesday 25th August 2010
 - Wednesday 1st December 2010.

- ROB PEAKER, Chairperson.