

CORPORATE HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMITTEE

ABERDEEN, 26th February, 2010. - Minute of Meeting of the CORPORATE HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMITTEE. Present:- Rob Peaker (EIS), Chairperson; and Councillor Leslie, Vice-Chairperson. City Council Representatives:- Councillors Corall (as substitute for Councillor McDonald); Noble (as substitute for Councillor Kevin Stewart) and Wendy Stuart.

Trade Union Representatives:- Joe Craig (UNITE); Sid Sandison (SSTA); John Noble (UCATT); Steve Robb (UNITE); Deirdre Macdonald (UNISON); and David McCulloch, Mike Middleton and Neil Watson (GMB).

Officers in attendance:- Ciaran Monaghan, Head of Service, Office of Chief Executive; Ewan Sutherland, Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development; Mary Agnew, Principal Health and Safety Adviser; Graham Hossack, Neil Yacamini, Gillian Milne, Jim Stephen and George Cruickshank, Operational Support Managers; and Karen Riddoch, Committee Services Officer (Clerk).

APOLOGIES

1. Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Councillors McDonald, Kevin Stewart and Young; and Fiona Smith and Karen Maxfield, UNISON.

CHAIRPERSON'S ANNOUNCEMENT

2. The Chairperson advised that Gena Falconer had left the Council and had moved to Inverness to work for Highland Council. He expressed his thanks to Gena for her work in relation to promoting and managing health and safety across the Council and stated that since she started working with the Council, two RoSPA Health and Safety awards had been achieved.

Mike Middleton and Councillor Leslie both agreed with the sentiments of the Chairperson.

Ewan Sutherland, Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development, advised that he would pass on the sentiments of the Committee to Gena and that the position of Health and Safety Manager was currently being advertised.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) to concur with the remarks of the Chairperson; and
- (ii) to otherwise note the information.

MINUTE OF PREVIOUS MEETING

3. The Committee had before them for consideration, the minute of their previous meeting of 25th November, 2009.

The Committee resolved:-

to approve the minute subject to the correction of a typographical error on page 8, article 14.

MATTERS ARISING**4. (A) Serious Incidents in Schools**

With reference to Article 6(A) of the minute of its meeting of 25th November, 2009, the Committee heard Jim Stephen advise that (a) the School Security Review Group had met twice with representatives from management, facilities, school head teachers and trade unions; (b) following an initial review on school security, a number of actions were identified which would be reported to the Head of Service; (c) an action plan would be prepared for risk assessments to be carried out across all schools; and (d) all current policies, procedures, guidance and processes would be gathered and combined into one guidance booklet and circulated to all schools.

Steve Robb requested that one of his members be involved in the School Security Review Group as he was a janitor with experience in this area. Deirdre Macdonald asked that a member from Unison be asked to participate in the group, names of both additional people were given to Jim Stephen.

The Committee resolved:-

to note the information.

(B) Oldmachar Academy Heating and Ventilation Systems

With reference to Article 6(C) of the minute of its meeting of 25th November, 2009, the Committee heard George Cruickshank advise that the work in the school would be undertaken during the summer school holidays.

The Committee resolved:-

to note the information.

(C) Corporate Health and Safety Policy

With reference to Article 12 of the minute of its meeting of 25th November, 2009, the Committee heard Mary Agnew advise that (a) the Corporate Health and Safety Policy had been signed by the Chief Executive on 9th February, 2010 and would be issued to all services and uploaded to the Zone; and (b) services were now required to review their health and safety policies to ensure they followed the Corporate Policy.

The Committee resolved:-

to note the information.

EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAMME

5. With reference to Article 1 of the minute of its meeting of 25th November, 2009, the Committee had before it a report prepared by Employee Advisory Resource on behalf of the Council which provided information relating to the usage of the Employee Assistance Programme by employees for the period 25th November to 31st December, 2009.

The report provided statistical information broken down into sub-categories relating to personal and work related issues. Information relating to the various website categories that had been accessed over the reporting period were contained in the report.

The Committee heard Mary Agnew advise that work was ongoing to promote the Service which included the recent payslip insert and wallet cards, leaflets and posters would be designed and issued as widely as possible.

The Committee resolved:-

to note that a statistical report would be submitted to each Committee in the future.

CORPORATE HEALTH AND SAFETY REPORT, OCTOBER TO DECEMBER, 2009

6. With reference to Article 10 of the minute of its meeting of 25th November, 2009, the Committee had before it a report by the Director for Corporate Governance, which provided details on the number and type of accidents, incidents and occurrences during the period October to December, 2009.

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

Accident/Incidents, Reportable Accidents/Incidents and Accident Rates

- 101 employee accidents were reported of which 15 were reportable to the enforcing authority;
- 44 incidents of employee assault were recorded by the Education, Culture and Sport Service, none of which were reportable;
- 19 accidents to third parties were reported of which 7 were reportable to the enforcing authority;
- 20 incidents were reported by employees;
- manual handling, slips and trips accounted for 26% of all reportable employee accidents; and
- the accident rate for the period was 1.53 accidents per 1,000 employees.

Dangerous Gas Occurrence

- there had been one dangerous gas occurrence relating to a cooker being fitted by a tenant using inappropriate fittings.

Compliance Monitoring

- a total of 18 compliance visits were made on the theme of first aid;
- various areas for improvements were identified for Services to action;

- from 1st March, 2010, compliance monitoring would be replaced by Workplace Health and Safety Management Performance Overview which would be undertaken by the Health and Safety Team.

Fire Risk Assessments

- the reports provided by the Health and Safety Adviser (Fire) included an action plan that prioritised the establishment's remedial action;
- fire risk assessment log books were being trialled for 4 months within 50 assisted and extra care living establishments.

Health and Safety Training

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

Health and Safety Executive (HSE Intervention)

- the HSE had contacted the Health and Safety Team regarding three issues that had all been investigated with appropriate action taken where necessary.

Health and Wellbeing

- the Employee Counselling Service had been replaced by a new support service for all Aberdeen City Council employees and elected members and provided a comprehensive support package and a web-based service which contained online fact sheets, self assessment tools and online counselling;
- the membership of the Employee Good Health Group had been refreshed and continued to collate information for the Healthy Working Lives - Silver Award submission.

Health and Safety Policies and Guidance

- the Corporate Health and Safety Policy had been signed and would be available on the Zone;
- a corporate noise procedure had been issued which set out a framework for the effective management of noise in the workplace.

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 accidents and work related ill health in line with the Health and Safety Commissions revitalising health and safety targets; and
- (c) to disseminate and take action on the health and safety information in the report.

Councillor Leslie requested that a training course be introduced for elected members and staff relating to the different alarm sounds that were raised for fire and bomb threats in Council buildings.

Mary Agnew advised that this was being looked at in conjunction with facilities staff as part of local arrangements in each building. Operational Support Managers were to identify training needs for their respective services and report this to the Health and Safety Team.

Mike Middleton (a) advised the Committee that there were more instances of items being left unattended in corridors and reception areas; and (b) requested that contractors in particular be notified of the policy.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) to note that the Principal Health and Safety Adviser would add information to the guidance document which would relate to contractors leaving items unattended in corridors and reception areas; and
- (ii) to approve the recommendations contained in the report.

OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH REPORT – OCTOBER TO DECEMBER 2009

7. With reference to Article 11 of the minute of its meeting of 25th November 2009, the Committee had before it a report by Serco, Occupational Health providers, which provided an update on the occupational health referrals and actions for the period October to December 2009.

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

- 201 appointments were delivered by Serco on behalf of the Council;
- 3 of these were medicals and 198 were referrals;
- 17 people did not attend, with a further 2 cancelling within 24 hours and 11 giving more than 24 hours notice;
- 17 new Hand Arm Vibration Syndrome (HAVS) questionnaires were screened and 52 tier 3 assessments were delivered;
- 14 new and 15 review physiotherapy sessions had been delivered.

The Committee heard Mary Agnew advise that (a) there was a high number referrals classed as unknown Service which would be addressed for the next Committee report; (b) psychological causation factors would be reported as work related or non-work related for future reports; and (c) in response to a question relating to Hand Arm Vibration Syndrome (HAVS) screening, that Serco had assessed all HAVS questionnaires on behalf of the Council which had not been reported in the expected timeframe and that there was now trained staff within the Council who would undertake the HAVS screening exercise.

The Chairperson asked why the percentage was so high for people attending appointments with Serco that resulted in no further action required. In response, Steve Robb advised that it may be related to the issue that staff were being signed back to work by their GP however they were not able to return to work until they had met with Serco which caused a longer delay in the employee returning to work. The Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development agreed that the timescales required to be reviewed and that this would be discussed with Serco.

The Committee resolved:-

to note the information.

HEALTH AND SAFETY ACTION PLAN

8. With reference to Article 13 of the minute of its meeting of 25th November 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 (a) in relation to item 2 (Asbestos Management), that the policy had been outstanding for a long period of time and hoped that it would be submitted to the appropriate Committee by June 2010; and (b) in relation to item 5 (Service Registers to merge to form Corporate Risk Assessment Register), that this was ongoing with three Services having completed their Risk Register.

George Cruickshank advised that the Asbestos Management Policy would be submitted to the Enterprise Planning and Infrastructure Committee on 31st May 2010 following the Appointment of the relevant Head of Service.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) to request that the Asbestos Management report and policy document be circulated to the Health and Safety Team and Trade Unions at the consultation stage prior to the report being submitted to the Enterprise Planning and Infrastructure Committee on 31st May 2010; and
- (ii) to otherwise note the information.

FUTURE SERVICE AND PROJECT HEALTH AND SAFETY REPORTS

9. With reference to Article 15 of the minute of its meeting of 25 November 2009, the Committee had before it for consideration, a timetable for Heads of Service and Project Directors to report to future meetings of the Committee which would outline all aspects of health and safety issues within their respective areas, on a directorate basis, with a view to brief members of the Committee on relevant issues across the Council which would provide a high level strategic overview of health and safety.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) to instruct the Clerk to issue the timetable to Directors and Heads of Service to ensure that the relevant officers report to the appropriate Committee meeting; and
- (ii) to otherwise note the timetable.

SERVICE REPORTS

10. The Committee had before them a copy of the most recent 6 monthly health and safety reports for each Service which provided an overview of health and safety activities within each Service.

The reports for each Service provided information on (a) the number of accidents and incidents that had occurred during the period in question; (b) the current position with regard to health and safety training; (c) workplace inspections that

had taken place and the relevant compliance figure; (d) issues that had been reported to the Health and Safety Executive (HSE); and (e) the number and type of health and safety achievements across the Services.

During the discussion Deirdre Macdonald highlighted concerns that she had received from a group of employees within the Housing and Environment Service, relating to their own personal safety whilst carrying out work allocated to them. Employees were being asked to enter uncontrolled environments that had not been risk assessed.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) that the issue referred to above be discussed with the Director of Housing and Environment and at the Service Health and Safety Committee;
- (ii) that an update on the situation be reported to the next meeting of this Committee
- (iii) to instruct the Principal Health and Safety Adviser to look at the current report template and re-issue to Services; and
- (iv) to otherwise note the content of the reports.

WORKLOAD MANAGEMENT STATEMENT

11. With reference to Article 16 of the minute of its meeting on 25th November 2009, the Committee had before it a revised version of the workload statement, prepared by Rob Peaker and Gena Falconer.

Rob Peaker (a) advised that some minor changes had been made to the document since the last meeting; (b) asked if there were any other changes to be made before the statement was signed off and issued to all employees; and (c) requested that the logos for all of the Trade Unions and the Council are added to the statement.

The Committee resolved:-

to instruct the Clerk to finalise the Workload Statement and issue to the Chief Executive for signature prior to adding it to the Zone and issuing to all Council owned establishments.

ANY OTHER COMPETENT BUSINESS

12. At this point in the proceedings, the Chairperson declared the meeting open for any other competent business, whereupon, Mike Middleton(a) advised the Committee on an incident that occurred at Summerhill Education Centre relating to water coming in through the roof into an area used as a tea room, which contained electrical appliances; (b) stated that he had reported the issue immediately and tried to prevent other staff from entering the room however it took longer than expected to close off the entire area; and (c) requested that a mechanism be put in place to ensure that areas are closed off quicker and that adequate signage is available to alert staff.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) to instruct the Health and Safety Team in consultation with Facilities staff to investigate what could be done in the short term and to look at providing a long term solution for similar events that may occur in any Council establishment in the future; and
- (ii) to otherwise note the information.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

13. The Committee noted that their next meeting was scheduled for Wednesday 12th May 2010 at 10.00am.

- **ROB PEAKER, Chairperson.**