

Time commenced - 9.04 am
Time finished - 10.00 am

CORPORATE SAFETY COMMITTEE 25 SEPTEMBER 2003

Present: Employer's Side

Councillor M Carr (in the Chair)
Mr R Cowlshaw (Chief Executive)
Ms S Scott (Chief Personnel Officer)
Mr A Flowers (Corporate Personnel Adviser)
Mr N Parkes-Rolfe (Corporate Personnel Adviser)
Mr D Parnham (Policy Officer, Education, Corporate Personnel)
Ms J Stone (Head of Service- Education Personnel)
Mrs K Taylor (Members Services Officer)
Mrs K Squires (Members Services Officer)

Trade Unions' Side

Mr S Fogell (UNISON)
Ms A Howitt (UNISON)
Ms K Parker (UNISON)
Mr I Jennison (NUT)
Mr M Gilbert (GMB)
Mr R Morgan (GMB)
Mr D Wilkinson (NASUWT)
Mr N Pheasant (UNISON)
Ms M Greenshields (UNISON)
Mr M Fox (UNISON)
Mr B Seagrave (UNISON)
Mr M O'Neill (NAFHE)
Mr M Thomas (UNISON)
Mr J McCallum (TGWU)
Mr S Harrison (UCATT)

Apologies: Mr A Franik (UNISON)
Mr J Swain (TGWU)
Mr J Pass (AMICUS)
Mr S Ward (UCATT)
Mr R Heath (UNISON)
Ms Y Burrell (UNISON)

12/03 Late Items Introduced by the Chair

There were no late items.

13/03 Minutes of Meeting held on 5 June 2003

The minutes of the meeting held on 5 June 2003 were agreed as a true record.

14/03 Matters Arising

The following Matters arising from the meeting held on 5 June 2003 were discussed:

(1) Water Hygiene Policy (Minute Number 03/03 refers)

Nigel Parkes-Rolfe advised that Property Services had advertised for a Water Hygiene Manager and that training needs assessments would be made by the new postholder.

(2) European Health and Safety Week (Minute No 03/03 refers)

At the meeting of the Committee on 5 June 2003 the Trade Unions' Side asked for the position on funding for the Health and Safety Week. Sue Scott reported that funding had been secured for the event.

(3) Communicable Diseases Protocol (Minute No 03/03 refers)

Nigel Parkes-Rolfe advised the Committee that people at high risk from communicable diseases had been identified within each department already as a result of work assessments and advice from Health and Safety staff.

Dave Wilkinson stated that the Local Education - LEA would not participate in a corporate policy. Dave Parnham responded that the position of the LEA was that as the protocol governed the exchange of information between the LEA and the health service any corporate policy would have to be acceptable to both. Nigel Parkes-Rolfe said this issue had been discussed at the Health Safety and Welfare Development Group – HSWDG.

Moz Greenshields was concerned that the trade unions would want input to the policy to ensure that all departments would abide by any protocol made.

(4) Hepatitis (Minute No 03/03 refers)

The trade unions' commented that this issue had not been put on the agenda of this committee. Nigel Parkes-Rolfe stated that it would be discussed at the Advisers Group meeting later that day.

(5) Fire Marshals (Minute No 03/03 refers)

The Trade Union side reported that the issue of whether Fire Marshals and First Aiders would be paid had not been put onto the Conditions of Service Working Party agenda. Adrian Flowers replied that this would be put on the agenda for the next meeting on 23 October 2003.

He also commented that there was some discrepancy between different departments over the pay of First Aiders and Fire Marshalls. This issue was raised in Social Services who paid employees who attended the 4 day First Aid course, not the 1 day course. This applied across all departments.

(6) DIY Work in Schools (Minute No 03/03 refers)

Dave Wilkinson asked why no satisfactory progress had been made on the issue of including details of DIY work in schools in the Education Health and Safety Newsletter. The trade unions' regarded this item as a priority.

Nigel Parkes-Rolfe responded that a draft article had been taken to the HSWDG and would be passed on to Education.

(7) Occupational Health Service (Minute No 06/03 refers)

Sue Scott advised that the post for manager of the in-house Occupational Health Service had been advertised. A potential premises was due to be visited on 30 September 2003 and that other Council and non-Council property was being considered.

(8) Articles Submitted for Gold Rush (Minute No 07/03 refers)

Dave Wilkinson asked if items submitted to the Plain English team could be returned to the author in order to check whether they had lost any meaning after editing. He emphasised that he was happy to submit items to the Plain English team, but commented that sometimes it was hard to avoid latin terms without losing the meaning of content.

(9) Working from Height (Minute No 08/03 refers)

The Trade Union's expressed concern that people in the Education Service use ladders at work. It was suggested that stickers be put on items that were above the maximum working height so that people were made aware that they should not use them.

Nigel Parkes-Rolfe reported that this item would continue to be discussed at the HSWDG

(10) Corporate Health and Safety Training (Minute No 09/03 refers)

The Trade Unions' requested an update on what progress had been made with corporate Health and Safety Training.

Nigel Parkes-Rolfe reported that a discussion document was being taken to the Chief Officer Group – COG -.

(11) Stewards Health and Safety Conference (Minute No 10/03 refers)

Dave Wilkinson commented that he was pleased with the publicity for this event in the *Goldrush*, but that it had not appeared in the Education Service Circular even though it was raised at the Education Service Circular Committee.

The Education Service responded by saying that it would appear in the Education Service Circular.

EMPLOYER'S SIDE ITEMS

15/03 Corporate Risk Assessment Policy

The Committee received a report from the Director of Policy, which set out the new draft corporate policy on risk assessment and general guidance for managers.

Nigel Parkes-Rolfe advised that the document had been to COG with little alteration. At the HSWDG there was a request from some departments that the policy side be firmed up. This was to make it clear that the policy must be adhered to, whilst the guidance could be interpreted by departments to suit their needs.

The Trade Unions' side praised Nigel Parkes-Rolfe's work on the document, but wanted to emphasise that they did not want to see the document diluted.

The draft policy and guidance was approved.

16/03 Accident Statistics April 2002 to March 2003

The Committee received a report from the Director of Policy which set out the annual accident trend and compared figures for the year 2002/2003 with those for the previous two years 2000/2001 and 2001/2002.

Across the Council accident rates decreased over the period April 2002 to March 2003. The number of days lost due to accidents had remained constant with manual handling accidents and slips, trips and falls the most numerous category. The overall number of these had gone down.

Nigel Parkes-Rolfe reported that there were problems with the collection and collation of accident statistics using the current database in the Occupational Health, Safety and Welfare team. A significant amount of work was carried out manually to produce the statistics. It was intended that in the long term the Vision personnel and payroll system would assist in this analysis.

Dave Wilkinson commented that stress related absence figures should be included in the statistics.

The Committee noted the report.

17/03 Council House Fire and Evacuation Procedure

The Committee received a report from the Director of Corporate Services, which set out a revised procedure for the evacuation of the Council House and proposed that this was used as a model for an evacuation plan for the St Mary's Gate Offices.

The Trade Unions' side expressed that they would need to look at the document and make any changes necessary. Nirmal Pheasant was concerned that the policy applied to the Council House and could not be used generically across other Council premises. Nigel Parkes-Rolfe emphasised that the document was an update and subject to comment at the committee. He was not aware that the Council House policy would be applied generically across other premises, it was merely being used as a model.

The Trade Unions expressed concern that the fire alarm could not be heard in some parts of the Council House and that there were also problems associated with activating the alarm.

Nigel Parkes-Rolfe stated that he was aware of the problems, which were being addressed and he assured the Committee that he would raise these issues with the relevant team.

Moz Greenshields asked who should be made aware of any other points of safety that Trade Union members were aware of. The Chief Executive asked that people make Chris Edwards aware of any issues to assist him in resolving the problems with the fire alarm.

TRADE UNIONS' SIDE ITEMS

18/03 Health and Safety Representatives Charter

Nirmal Pheasant presented the comments of Unison's Health and Safety Committee and those of the other Trade Unions on the Health and Safety Representatives Charter in the form of a report.

The charter was generally received positively, but Nirmal did not want to see that powers of the representatives be diluted. This document was to be taken to the HSDWG.

19/03 Corporate Risk Assessment Policy

Nirmal Pheasant asked if the Corporate Risk Assessment policy as presented in Minute number 13/03 had gone to the Joint Consultative Committee - JCC - yet. Nigel Parkes-Rolfe responded that it was an ongoing item and so had not been to the JCC. He added that it would go to the HSDWG in the following 3 weeks to be ratified and then put to the JCC.

20/03 Stress Statistics

Nirmal Pheasant requested on behalf of the Trade Unions that stress statistics be received by the Committee. This was supported by Dave Wilkinson who was concerned that stress resulting in teachers' absence or leaving a position was not being reported by schools.

It was agreed that stress statistics would be gathered and presented to this Committee in future.

NPR

21/03 Health and Safety Representation on the Chief Officer Group

The Trade Unions requested that as Health and Safety is considered to be at the root of all policy development that a Trade Union representative be permitted to sit on the Chief Officer Group.

The Chief Executive responded that he felt that this would alter the way that COG functioned, but agreed to take it to them for discussion.

RC

22/03 'Revitalising Health and Safety' Document

Nigel Parkes-Rolfe presented the Council's progress on meeting the Government's targets. Nationally the Council was set to fall short of the targets. Calculations had shown that working days lost due to accidents

had decreased by 5% at the end of 2002 and that the target was to reduce them by 15% by 2004. The Council's incident rate of major injuries had reduced by 10% at the end of 2002.

23/03 Driving and Mobile Phones

The Trade Unions requested guidance for its members with regard to using mobile phones whilst driving on Council business. Legislation regarding the use of mobile phones while driving had not been set at the time. Nigel Parkes-Rolfe responded by quoting the Commercial Services directive, which was to not use mobile phones at any time while driving. He commented that this seemed to be an acceptable response in the absence of any other guidance.

Moz Greenshields accepted that caution was the best option, but warned that she would not be happy if she were called to represent an employee at a disciplinary hearing as a result of them not answering their mobile phones as he or she had been driving.

The Chief Executive commented that the Council would have to wait until the legislation had been issued and comment then.

Nigel Parkes-Rolfe commented that the Health and Safety Executive needed to consider everyone who used mobile phones for work and that this item would be taken to the HSDWG.

NPR

MINUTES END