

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
SAFETY COMMITTEE HELD
AT BUNTINGFORD SERVICE CENTRE
ON TUESDAY 27 NOVEMBER 2007 AT
2.00 PM

PRESENT: Simon Drinkwater (Chairman).
Peter Dickinson, Sue Gray, Jenny Francis,
Mark Kingsland, Andrew Pulham, Barbara Sylvia,
Paul Thomas, Steve Whinnett.

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE

Peter Mannings.

35 APOLOGIES

An apology for absence was submitted on behalf of Helen Farrell.

36 MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING

The minutes of the meeting held on 14 September 2007 were agreed as a correct record.

(A) Minute 24(A) – Fire Risk Assessments

Peter Dickinson reported that fire risk assessments had all been approved and uploaded onto the Intranet.

37 HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY REVIEW/UPDATES

Peter Dickinson reported that all new health and safety policies had been uploaded onto the intranet. He advised that the Stress Management Policy was being finalised having been received at CMT and SMG.

Peter Dickinson advised that following Heads of Service feedback, risk assessments would be built into the Health and Safety Policy Review. He also reported that the

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authority could move towards the Environmental Health model for risk assessments and reinstate the role of Safety Liaison Officers.

Peter Dickinson undertook to produce generic office risk assessments and upload these onto the intranet. He also undertook to contact Heads of Service to discuss risk assessments. PD

The Committee was advised that risk assessments would be received at Safety Committee to ensure union representatives were present when these were considered.

In response to the Chairman's comments relating to Heads of Service workloads and a consistent approach to risk assessments across the authority, Peter Dickinson undertook to compose a chart for service heads to utilise when conducting risk assessments. PD

Peter Dickinson reported that he had spoken with the Wallfields fire marshalls. The Committee was advised that a positive dialogue had occurred following a good response from volunteers at Wallfields.

Peter Dickinson highlighted a number of deficiencies in the coverage of the Causeway Office in respect of designated fire marshalls and the role call marshall. He emphasised the importance of ensuring coverage of all floors by fire marshalls.

Peter Dickinson reported that a suggestion that came out of the dialogue with the Wallfields fire marshalls was that all new staff be introduced to fire marshalls as part of formal inductions.

The Committee had a general discussion around Evac Chairs, refuge areas and also in respect of fire marshall coverage and training. The Chairman undertook to take up the issue of fire marshall coverage at the Causeway Office with Philip Hamberger. SD

38 NEW REGULATIONS, IF ANY

Paul Thomas reported that new working time regulations had come into force that had increased annual leave entitlement from 4 weeks to 5.6 weeks.

The Committee was advised that new legislation that covered Corporate Manslaughter was due to come into force on 6 April 2008. Paul Thomas summarised the legislative changes and advised that when in force the legislation would make it easier for authorities to be found guilty of negligence and charged with Corporate Manslaughter.

39 FIRE RISK ASSESSMENTS

Steve Whinnett reported that the Council had a full set of completed fire risk assessments. He advised that once a number of corrections had been made, he would report on this at the next meeting.

SW

40 ACCIDENT AND INCIDENT REPORTS

Peter Dickinson advised that there had been 5 accidents involving employees for the period 15 September 2007 to 23 November 2007.

It was noted that incident reports for the Pools were being received incorrectly and sporadically. Mark Kingsland emphasised his concerns in respect of incident reporting at the pools. He undertook to update the Committee at a future meeting.

MK

41 HEALTH SAFETY AND WELFARE TEAM

The Committee was advised that the issue of the Health, Safety and Welfare Team had not progressed since the last meeting. The Chairman undertook to contact Philip Hamberger to take this issue forward.

SD

Peter Dickinson reported that the membership of the Health, Safety and Welfare Team needed to be looked into along with the group's function and terms of reference. He undertook to e-mail the terms of reference to the Chairman of Safety Committee.

PD

42 ITEMS FROM TRADE UNION

Sue Gray expressed concerns in respect of an e-mail sent to all staff in respect of cars being parked alongside the building at Wallfields. Peter Dickinson emphasised that the e-mail was sent due to the importance of ensuring a clear route for emergency vehicles to and from the far end of the Wallfields staff car park.

Paul Thomas commented that this issue could be addressed through the appropriate line managers. Peter Dickinson also highlighted the issue of course organisers providing insufficient information relating to parking provision at Wallfields.

Jenny Francis enquired as to whether there was a specific budget for new office chairs, following significant numbers of requests for new chairs following display screen risk assessments.

The Chairman reported that requests for new chairs would be addressed on the basis of need and where occupational health have advised that an Officer requires a new chair, the Council will ensure budgets fund the replacement.

Peter Dickinson reported that desks could be raised to address the issue of Officers being unable to adopt appropriate posture. He also advised that the arms of office chairs could be removed for the same reason.

Peter Dickinson and the Chairman emphasised that unserviceable office chairs must be replaced. Steve Whinnett highlighted the importance of budget forward planning to ensure office reorganisations can be funded

without adversely affecting existing budgets.

In response to a query from Sue Gray in respect of staff sickness, Peter Dickinson reported that Human Resources did not have access to information relating to an Officer's sickness record, unless the Officer had given consent for the information to be released.

Peter Dickinson advised that Human Resources did not have access to information that could damage an Officers reputation or information that identified a specific Officer.

43 BUNTINGFORD SERVICE CENTRE

A log of heavy vehicle movements at Buntingford Service Centre was tabled for the period 19 to 25 September 2007, Peter Dickinson advised that he had highlighted the periods of peak activity.

Andrew Pulham and Barbara Sylvia updated the Committee in respect of the main issues affecting officers working from Buntingford Service Centre. Andrew Pulham reported that the warmth of the rooms necessitated opening windows allowing fumes from HGVs to enter the building.

The Committee was advised that the status quo was unsustainable and the building should be sealed and effective functional air conditioning unit should be installed. Steve Whinnett reported that funding had been allocated for comfort cooling for the service centre via Asset Management Sub Group and Capital Strategy Group.

Barbara Sylvia advised that pedestrian access to the site was an issue, due to the dangers posed by the speed of traffic. Steve Whinnett undertook to speak to Martin Shrosbree in respect of sending an e-mail to the landlord to consider a form of speed control for the access road.

SW

Barbara Sylvia commented that the security issue of the rear door being propped open was ongoing. Steve

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Whinnett stated that a card reader could be installed but advised that this measure may not resolve the issue of the door being wedged open. He also commented that the site was sufficiently busy that there could be a case for a permanent security person at the front gate.

Steve Whinnett undertook to speak to MRS in respect of the issue of the rear door being propped open.

SW

Andrew Pulham stated that the issue of barrier control and car parking provision must be in place for when extra usage of the service centre commences in the middle of 2008. He expressed strong concerns in respect of not being engaged in discussions relating to extra users of the Service Centre.

It was noted that Andrew Pulham requested that if there were project groups meeting in respect of additional contract staff being situated at Buntingford Service Centre, he be invited onto those project groups as the Head of Service who works from the site.

Barbara Sylvia raised the issue of the men's toilet and adjacent corridor smelling of cigarette smoke from the smoking area outside of the building. Peter Dickinson commented that it was a management responsibility to ensure smoking regulations were adhered to.

44 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Thursday 24 January 2008, at 2.00 pm, in the Conference Room, Bishop's Stortford.

The meeting closed at 3.30 pm