

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
SAFETY COMMITTEE HELD IN THE
MEETING ROOM, BUNTINGFORD
SERVICE CENTRE ON MONDAY 12
MAY 2008 2.00 PM

PRESENT: Simon Drinkwater (Chairman).
Dave Cooper, Peter Dickinson, Sue Gray,
Jenny Francis, Mark Kingsland, Graham Mully,
Jean Petrie and Alasdair McWilliams.

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE

Peter Mannings.

59 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of
Cliff Cardoza, Helen Farrell, Jeff Hughes, Andrew Pulham,
Martin Shrosbree, Kevin Steptoe, Barbara Sylvia,
Paul Thomas and Steve Whinnett.

60 MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING

The minutes of the meeting held on 25 March 2008 were
agreed as a correct record subject to the following
amendment:

(A) Minute 56 – Accident and Incident Reports

Delete -’Peter Dickinson advised that there had
been no accidents involving Officers for the period
25 January to 25 March 2008’.

Insert - ‘Peter Dickinson advised that there had been
no accidents involving Officers for the period 25
January to 22 March 2008’.

(B) Causeway Office Soap Dispenser

Sue Gray reported that the soap dispenser had

been filled.

61 HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY REVIEW/UPDATES

Peter Dickinson reported that Helen Aston of Zurich Municipal Risk Management had agreed to undertake a Health and Safety Audit for the authority. He advised that audit would streamline the policy and ensure that it complied with legislation. He also advised that the audit would review risk assessment processes.

Peter Dickinson reported that sections of the policy would be referred to the Safety Committee as required.

Peter Dickinson submitted an update in respect of risk assessments. He stated that he would produce a set of risk assessment tools to cover day to day work activities such as manual handling and driving. PD

In response to a query from Jean Petrie, Peter Dickinson defined the roles of the Safety Liaison Officer (SLO) and competent person. He reported that the competent person would be a technical expert in a particular field such as building control.

Peter Dickinson undertook to produce a risk assessment flow chart for the benefit of Heads of Service. He commented that some service areas had a greater need for risk assessments than services with office based teams. PD

Peter Dickinson undertook to draft a definition of the SLO and competent person and e-mail this to the Safety Committee along with the risk assessment flow chart. He updated the Committee on the process for risk assessments and emphasised the importance of compliance across the authority. PD

In respect of fire drills, Peter Dickinson stated that all areas of the Council's premises had fire marshall coverage and updated guidance had been sent to all fire marshalls. He reported that fire drills would be arranged at all Council

offices.

In response to a query from Dave Cooper in respect of evac chairs on the first floor at Wallfields, Peter Dickinson reported that details of all trained users had been placed on the intranet along with revised fire plans and details of first aiders and fire marshalls.

62 NEW REGULATIONS, IF ANY

Peter Dickinson reported that new regulations in respect of an employer's duty to protect staff from sexual discrimination from customers or third parties had been published in March and had come into force on 16 April 2008.

The Safety Committee was advised that if an employer failed to take action to protect an employee following 3 reported cases of sexual harassment, the employee could then seek damages from the employer.

Peter Dickinson stated that if two incidents of harassment went unaddressed an employer could be judged to be responsible. He advised that employers had a duty to protect staff by putting up notices warning customers in respect of inappropriate behaviour towards Officers and barring persistent offenders from Council premises.

63 ACCIDENT AND INCIDENT REPORTS

Peter Dickinson advised that there had been 1 accident involving an employee for the period 22 March 2008 to 9 May 2008. He commented that this had been a choking incident.

Mark Kingsland advised of an unfortunate incident at Leventhorpe Pool whereby a swimmer suffered a massive heart attack in the pool and second attack on the pool side. He reported that despite the best efforts of paramedics and staff at the pool, the swimmer had died.

MK

The Safety Committee was advised that paramedics had commended staff for their actions and Stevenage Leisure had sent letters of commendation to the staff involved. Mark Kingsland stated that George A Robertson would be sending similar correspondence to staff at the pool.

64 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

(A) Buntingford Depot

Alasdair McWilliams updated the Committee on a number of Officer concerns in respect of Buntingford Depot. He advised of concerns relating to the lack of air conditioning and plans to introduce secondary glazing and blinds. He stated that of particular concern was the effective sealing of the building without effective air conditioning being installed.

Peter Dickinson undertook to raise the issue with Martin Shrosbree. Alasdair McWilliams commented that relocating the parking office to the other side of the corridor had raised the issue of unpleasant smells from bins outside windows adversely affecting the working environment.

PD

Peter Dickinson commented that a solution could be to relocate the East Herts Officers at Buntingford to Wallfields. Alasdair McWilliams stated that this had been suggested as a long term solution.

(B) Eye Tests

Peter Dickinson reported that instead of claiming eye test fees back with a receipt, Officers would be issued with Vouchers. He stated that opticians would still have to sign a form and Officers would be kept informed with intranet updates.

ACTION

(C) Health and Safety Audit

Graham Mully advised that he needed volunteers to meet the facilitator for the forthcoming Health and Safety Audit. He stated that he was specifically looking for a Unison representative, a representative from Leisure, some Heads of Service and an Officer from Property. He commented that meetings should last an hour.

All

(D) Fault Reporting System

Graham Mully reported that a fault reporting system would be introduced via the intranet. He commented that the system would simplify the role of SLOs and would assist stakeholders in reporting genuine faults.

(E) Safety Guidelines for Officers

In response to a request from Jean Petrie, Peter Dickinson undertook to meet with the Service Development Officer to offer guidance in respect of safety guidelines for parks and open spaces and water. He requested that Jackie Bruce send him a meeting request.

PD/JB

65 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Monday 14 July 2008, at 2.00 pm, in the Conference Room, Bishop's Stortford.

The meeting closed at 2.45 pm