

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
SAFETY COMMITTEE HELD IN
ROOM 27, WALLFIELDS, HERTFORD
ON MONDAY 6 OCTOBER 2008 AT
2.00 PM

PRESENT: Simon Drinkwater (Chairman).
Roy Crow, Peter Dickinson, Sue Gray,
Mark Kingsland, Graham Mully, Jean Petrie,
Barbara Sylvia, Andrew Pulham, Paul Thomas.

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE

Peter Mannings.

73 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of
Dave Cooper, Peter Searle and Steve Whinnett.

74 MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING

(A) Minute 68 – Health and Safety Policy
Review/Updates

Graham Mully reported that the Health and Safety
Audit had been very successful. He
advised that Officers expected a report from Zurich
Municipal shortly, subject to Officer evidence
being sent to Helen Aston.

Graham Mully advised that Helen Aston had been
requested to cover the issue of Safety Liaison
Officers, Competent Persons and Display Screen
Assessors when conducting the Health and Safety
Audit.

75 HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY REVIEW/UPDATES

Peter Dickinson reported that Helen Aston was due to
report back with comprehensive guidance for Officers in
respect of the structure of the policy. He stated that a steer

from Helen Aston would assist in streamlining the policy and ensuring the document was relevant and user friendly.

Peter Dickinson advised that Helen Aston would feedback in respect of risk assessments. He commented that the report would make particular reference to levels of compliance on the conduct of risk assessments.

Peter Dickinson stated that risk assessments should be addressed at a corporate level, in order to identify best practice across the authority. He commented that teams often conducted risk assessments differently and a review of policy would streamline the process.

Graham Mully commented that most Heads of Service had either completed risk assessments or were in the process of completing this work. He commented that support from Safety Liaison Officers was essential in identifying common problems.

Graham Mully advised that Health and Safety floor inspections were due to commence on 22 October 2008 at Wallfields and on 27 October 2008 at the Causeway. He advised that inspections for other Council sites were being arranged. The Committee was advised that Graham Mully and Peter Dickinson would conduct the assessments pending discussions on permanent arrangements with Facilities Management and UNISON.

Simon Drinkwater commented that there was a role for the Safety Committee in addressing any common themes that arose from Risk Assessments. Peter Dickinson emphasised the importance of communicating actions and associated timescales to Officers.

Peter Dickinson stated that Buntingford Officers required updated training and information in respect of Fire Drills. He reported that Officers had been provided with relevant procedures along with high visibility jackets.

ACTION

Roy Crow commented on whether fire risk assessments had been conducted. The Safety Committee was advised that Fire Risk Assessments had been addressed corporately some time ago.

Jenny Francis and Sue Gray were requested to inform the Safety Committee if Officers raised any safety issues. The Safety Committee was also advised that Officers could utilise the fault reporting system on the intranet or speak to Peter Dickinson.

Jenny
Francis/
Sue Gray

76 NEW REGULATIONS

The Safety Committee was advised that the Health and Safety Executive had issued guidance on 1 October 2008 on how to prevent violence in the workplace. Peter Dickinson commented that basic risk assessment information was available on the intranet.

77 FIRE RISK ASSESSMENTS

Peter Dickinson requested that Safety Committee liaise with Steve Whinnett on conducting the next round of fire risk assessments.

Safety
Committee

78 ACCIDENT AND INCIDENT REPORTS

Peter Dickinson advised that, for the period 12 July 2008 to 3 October 2008, there had been 3 minor accidents involving Officers. He detailed the nature of these accidents.

The Safety Committee was advised of a reportable incident involving the contamination by pesticide of a Pest Control Vehicle. Peter Dickinson commented that an independent vehicle check had resulted in the vehicle being declared unfit for purpose. He also commented that the Environmental Health Officers concerned had received precautionary blood tests due to possible exposure to the spilt chemicals.

79 ITEMS FROM TRADE UNION

Concerns were raised in respect of the vulnerability of benefit staff vulnerable due to the lack of specific interview rooms being available at Wallfields. Concerns were also raised in respect of maintaining the security of confidential information disclosed in benefit interviews.

Simon Drinkwater undertook to raise the issue with Neil Sloper. He stated that he would comment on whether there was any possibility of reconfiguring the Wallfields reception to accommodate interview rooms.

Simon
Drinkwater

80 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

(A) Buntingford Depot

Barbara Sylvia commented on Officer concerns on the discovery of rodent infestation at Buntingford Depot. She advised that mice had been discovered under a desk in the parking office and also in the ground floor shower.

Barbara Sylvia stated that Sally Andrews had reported the issue to pest control Officers in Environmental Health. Peter Dickinson commented on whether food waste was being disposed of appropriately. Jean Petrie undertook to check with Pest Control Officers over whether rodent traps had been set.

Barbara Sylvia advised that fumes inside the building and also from outside was still an issue of concern for Officers.

Jean Petrie

Barbara Sylvia raised the issue of pedestrian safety at the depot. Andrew Pulham commented that the issue of pedestrian safety would cease when the parking officers relocated to Hertford.

(B) Work Station Training Course

Graham Mully commented that a training course was available for work station assessors. He commented that the course was due to be rolled out later this year and home workers would be invited to attend.

The Safety Committee was advised that trained home workers would be permitted to conduct their own risk assessments, so long as these were formally logged.

(C) European Health and Safety Week

Peter Dickinson, on behalf of Paul Thomas, advised that European Health and Safety Week started on 24 October 2008. He commented this would be an opportunity to look into risk assessments across the authority.

81 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

To be arranged. It was noted that the next meeting would take place in the Meeting Room at Buntingford Depot.

The meeting closed at 3.05 pm