

JOINT NEGOTIATING COMMITTEE

MONDAY 12 MARCH 2012

MINUTES OF THE MEETING

Attending:

Councillors:

Sutton (Chairman), Ayling, Douris, Whitman, Wood and C Wyatt-Lowe

Trade Union: Janet Colyer, Jim Doyle, and Will Cherry (Vice Chair)

Officers: Janice Milsom, Assistant Director (Strategy & Transformation, Community & Organisation), Helen Price, Corporate Safety, Health and Care Officer and Pat Duff, Member Support Officer (Minutes)

The meeting began at 6.31 pm

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Paul Farley and Maggie Harvey.

2. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 12 December 2011 were agreed by the members present and were signed by the Chairman.

3. MATTERS ARISING

There were no matters arising.

4. HEALTH AND SAFETY UPDATE

The Corporate Safety, Health and Care Officer gave the following updates on the priorities detailed in the report:

1. Priority 1, detailed health and safety roles and responsibilities – a programme of risk controls had been set.
2. Priority 2, departmental risk reviews – top corporate risks had been identified and a Corporate Prioritised Risk Register had been compiled to enable managers to take control of risks in priority. Red risks were high risk activities that needed controlling.
3. Priority 2, corporate risk control procedures – corporate risk controls were being written e.g. driving for work and construction property risks. This would allow managers to manage risks with a consistent approach.
4. Priority 2, organisation training needs analysis – training needs for the coming year had been identified. A Corporate Training Analysis had been created of all courses available for 2012-13.
5. Priority 3, safety management procedures – these were complete and ready.

6. Priority 2, communications strategy – this had been completed.
7. Priority 2, health and safety performance management reporting system (using CorVu) – work was beginning on that.
8. Priority 2 – monitoring of the safety management system – departmental Health and Safety Committees were beginning to take place. The Corporate Health and Safety Committee would oversee these.
9. Priority 3 – audits and reviews of the current health and safety management system – the audit programme was largely completed, the rest were imminent.
10. Priority 2 – health and safety management for all levels of management from CMT downwards – training for CMT was taking place on 20 March with a similar session on 23 March for Group Managers.

Councillor Douris asked that more up to date updates be included in the report.

Councillor C Wyatt-Lowe asked if the risk register would be coming to the committee and how many of the items were red.

The Corporate Safety, Health and Care Officer said that it could be made available and would be placed on Sharepoint so that all Group Managers could access and update it. There were some red items but, even with all the health and safety controls, high risk activities would always have a level of risk attached and these needed to be controlled.

W Cherry asked for it to be emailed to the Trade Unions as they needed to know what controls were required to safeguard employees. The Trade Union input should be valued as they had worked hard to raise peoples' awareness.

Councillor Douris asked if any of the red risks were showing a negative direction of travel.

The Corporate Safety, Health and Care Officer replied this would be reviewed quarterly and this was just the first quarter.

J Doyle said compilation of the register had been a very efficient and productive piece of health and safety work and asked if there was a Safety Co-ordinator for each area and if there was a list identifying them.

The Corporate Safety, Health and Care Officer advised that the Safety Co-ordinator's role was to assist the Group manager in some administrative tasks e.g. collecting and ensuring VDU risk assessments were done and filed, check drivers licences and business insurance. Group Managers had overall responsibility for all services beneath them and for ensuring that Safety Co-ordinators were working well with the Corporate Safety, Health and Care Officer. The Group Managers should report on the progress of their action plans at their quarterly meetings.

J Doyle asked who oversaw and implemented the risk register and if the councillors were involved.

The Corporate Safety, Health and Care Officer said that the minutes of the Group Managers' meetings would go to the Corporate Health and Safety Committee, whose

minutes would go to CMT. All actions had to be achievable and if progress was not happening, that would be reported through CorVu and this information would reach CMT.

J Doyle expressed concern about how the actions were going to be monitored and pursued.

Councillor C Wyatt-Lowe asked if the information would be included in the quarterly performance report that went to the Overview and Scrutiny Committees and to Cabinet.

Councillor Douris said that concerns had been raised about attendance at Health and Safety Committees. A number of risk monitoring activities went to the Overview and Scrutiny Committees and to the Audit Committee. The monitoring was there and it rested with the relative Overview and Scrutiny Committees who had to be alerted to the risk.

Councillor Sutton suggested that each Overview and Scrutiny Committee had an item on the health and safety risks.

This was agreed.

W Cherry asked how information could be fed back to councillors if it was being run from Hertford. The outsourcing was a potential risk.

J Doyle asked what the future of the Corporate Safety, Health and Care Officer's role was.

The Assistant Director (Strategy and Transformation; Community and Organisation) advised that a report would be going to Cabinet at the end of April with proposals to enter into joint working with Hertfordshire County Council. The reporting had been pushed down to managers and this would not change. The health and safety service provided by the Corporate Safety, Health and Care Officer was an advisory one and this should be maintained. The service would be part of the Service Level Agreement that would be considered in April.

Councillor Wyatt-Lowe asked if the Corporate Safety, Health and Care Officer would be the liaison between the Council and Hertfordshire County Council.

The Assistant Director (Strategy and Transformation; Community and Organisation) said nothing had been decided yet.

J Doyle said that, as part of the consultation, the Union should be able to see the Service Level Agreement.

The Assistant Director (Strategy and Transformation; Community and Organisation) agreed this could be possible.

J Doyle asked if funding of training for Safety Co-ordinators was included in the funding for staff development.

The Assistant Director (Strategy and Transformation; Community and Organisation) said the health and safety budget was largely used for first aid training and training at Cupid Green. Any further budget came from the corporate budget.

The Corporate Safety, Health and Care Officer said that some externally run courses could cost £800.00 per delegate and it was cheaper to buy a licence and make the course available to more people.

J Doyle asked if the Safety Co-ordinator was supported from Staff Development.

The Assistant Director (Strategy and Transformation; Community and Organisation) said it was this year. The budget was not lost this would be checked and a breakdown provided.

Action

1. The Risk Register to be emailed to committee members and the Trade Unions, in colour and marked with r (red) ,g (green) and a (amber) – **HP**
2. Overview and Scrutiny Committees be asked to have an item on the health and safety risks – **HP**
3. A breakdown of the budget for Safety Co-ordinator training to be provided – **JM.**

5. FUNDING OF STAFF DEVELOPMENT

The Assistant Director (Strategy and Transformation; Community and Organisation) summarised the report and gave assurance that funding for staff development had continued at the Council. The Cabinet and Chief Officers supported this. A lot of authorities had reduced their budgets.

The topics covered in the Corporate Training Budget came from staff appraisals and these were fed up to the Corporate Training Programme – classroom style. In addition, the Council paid for licences for each member of staff to have access to e-learning opportunities – many from home. This would be continued.

Service training budget as set out in the table on page 6 of the report was for professional training and would be targeting professional development e.g. planners and accountants.

Managing the Council's change programme had gone down to Team Leaders. An evaluation would be done.

The budget was still well supported. There was a deliberate under spend this year as it was unknown how far down the organisation T3 would go. There was still a training reserve but it was felt that next years budget allocation would be sufficient.

Councillor Ayling said Councillor Rance's question from the last meeting had been answered. The Council's commitment to training and development was shown in the report. Despite the number of employees being reduced, the level of training budget had increased.

Councillor Douris asked if there was anything to show that, when an employee had received training, they remained with the Council for a longer period than if they had not received it.

The Assistant Director (Strategy and Transformation; Community and Organisation) said this had not been measured. If the Council funded a professional training course,

the employee had to sign a form saying they would stay with the Council for two years or pay back the funding for the training. All staff had individual training records.

W Cherry expressed concern about e-learning as some staff did not have access to a computer and it lacked motivation. W Cherry also asked the cost of it.

The Assistant Director (Strategy and Transformation; Community and Organisation) said the e-learning licence cost £5,400.00 for all users, including members. Regarding motivation, the younger people found it natural to log on to learn skills. Tutors brought in would take on a maximum of 15 people at a time and it was very expensive. E-learning had been actively promoted with lunchtime drop in sessions available. Employees could ask for time off to do it. There was an interesting concept funded by Improvement East where local authorities were developing their own e-learning programmes and sharing them.

J Doyle supported the move towards more e-learning, especially with more people working from home in the future. The Council would be spending more money to develop fewer staff. It was essential that some money was allocated to the training of Health and Safety Co-ordinators.

Councillor Sutton agreed that e-learning gave a more consistent standard of tuition.

J Colyer felt there should be inter action between the manager and the member of staff to avoid the problems of access and computer literacy.

Councillor Sutton said that e-learning gave fairness to all but concerns had been noted.

Councillor C Wyatt-Lowe said every young person was familiar with computers. The Council needed to ensure older staff were given every opportunity to access e-learning as it was the way forward and was money well spent.

6. SERCO – FACILITIES MANAGEMENT

The Assistant Director (Strategy and Transformation; Community and Organisation) circulated a paper that detailed the consultation that had taken place with staff, meetings with Serco and meetings with Unison.

Responses to the consultation would be incorporated into the report and into any subsequent contract documentation.

Staff bulletins – Dacorum Delivers, were sent to all staff. Personal information was to be sent to Serco as, if the transfer went ahead, Serco would need up to date information on staff.

Human Resources and the Shared Services Project Team had been meeting weekly with Unison to update them.

W Cherry was happy with the report. Anything further would be said by Unison at the Cabinet meeting.

Councillor Sutton was pleased that, following concerns expressed at JNC in December, there appeared to be a thorough consultation process and said he would like to think that all those who had been consulted had said what they wanted to say

and took part in the process. The Councillor hoped everyone was satisfied that the correct process had been followed through.

7. ANY OTHER BUSINESS/FUTURE WORK PROGRAMME

7.1 Membership of the Committee

J Doyle announced that he was standing down from the committee and that this was his last meeting.

W Cherry moved a vote of thanks to J Doyle from the committee.

This was agreed.

Councillor Sutton said J Doyle would be missed.

7.2 Future Work Programme

J Colyer circulated a paper regarding the Frequent/Casual Car Users Allowance.

Action

J Colyer to work with the Assistant Director (Strategy and Transformation; Community and Organisation) to bring a report on Car Users Allowance following concerns expressed to J Colyer about the removal of the Essential Car Users Allowance.

8. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

| Meeting Date – start time 6.30 pm | Date agenda to be circulated |
|--|-------------------------------------|
| Monday 21 May 2012 | Monday 30 April 2012 |
| Monday 3 September 2012 | Monday 13 August 2012 |
| Monday 3 December 2012 | Monday 12 November 2012 |
| Monday 4 March 2013 | Monday 11 February 2013 |

This was agreed and noted.

The meeting ended at 7.35 pm