
EXCERPT FROM THE MINUTES OF THE CORPORATE RESOURCES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD ON 22 JULY 2004

CROS.110/04 HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY

The Head of Member Support and Employee Services presented report ME.17/04 concerning the Council's Health and Safety Policy, which had been revised as a result of the reorganisation in December 2002.

Mr Williams sought approval of the updated Corporate Health and Safety Policy which would go back to the Executive prior to its submission to Council.

The Health and Safety Manager was also present at the meeting.

Discussion arose, during which Members raised a number of issues including:

1. A section providing comments on health and safety should be included within the Executive report template.
2. Although the Policy dealt with physical health and safety, no reference had been made to stress. That was an issue upon which the Health and Safety Executive was currently doing a great deal of work.

In response, Mr Majhi advised that a Stress Policy had been brought out in 1996 and which was currently under review. A risk assessment would be put in place shortly. Clearly the matter required a careful and considered approach.

3. Referring to Section 2.7 (d) concerning Members, a Member asked whether developments in relation to sections 2.7 (a), (b) and (c) could also be reported to Overview and Scrutiny.

Mr Majhi stated that Members were welcome to receive that information.

4. Was a separate policy in place covering lone workers?

In response, Mr Williams advised that a separate aspect to the Policy was arrangements covering operational issues, which had not been circulated to Members because of its considerable size. Arrangements were in place to cover lone working and a policy would be produced in the next few months.

5. A Member questioned the liabilities placed upon Members, in response to which Mr Majhi read out to the Committee a statement from the Health and Safety Executive.

6. Referring to the new signing in arrangements, it was noted that separate procedures were in place for visitors, visitors attending committee rooms and employees not based at the Civic Centre. Members asked whether it would not be sensible to have one system in place and whether a “swipe card” system could be implemented.

In response, Mr Majhi advised that it was very difficult at the moment to enforce such procedures. He would, however, be writing to all Chairmen to advise them of their responsibilities and ensure that the new system worked. As regards swipe cards then those proved complex to use from a fire perspective. A comprehensive search process was in place to ensure that the building was empty in the case of emergency.

The matter would be kept under review and he welcomed Members’ support.

The Town Clerk and Chief Executive added that it was important that Members sign in and out of the building.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted, together with the issues raised by the Committee.