

Health and Safety Executive Minutes		LAFORUM 05	
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## LOCAL AUTHORITIES FORUM MEETING (LA FORUM)

Minutes of the 5<sup>th</sup> meeting of the LA Forum held on Thursday 18 July 2002, Fortune Room, Rose Court, 2 Southwark Bridge, London SE1 9HS

<u>Present</u>	<u>Representing</u>	<u>Apologies</u>	<u>Observers</u>
Robert Parkes (Chair)	HSE	John Cullen	Joyce Edmond-Smith (HSE Commissioner)
Alistair Dodd	Director of Corporate Services, Highland Council	Rhona Wells	
John Holden	IOSH	Nikki Hughes	
Hugh Robertson	UNISON	Chris Kaufman	
Steve Sumner	Employers Organisation		
Mandy Wright	Employers Organisation		
Paul Barnsley	GMB		
Jonathan Lloyd	Syniad		
Debbie Thiara	HSE		
Nikki Davis	HSE		

### 1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Robert Parkes, chairing the meeting in John Cullen's absence, welcomed everyone to the 5<sup>th</sup> meeting of the LA Forum. He advised that Alistair Dodd is replacing Anne Macpherson as a representative of COSLA. Apologies were received from non-attendees.

### 2. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING AND MATTERS ARISING

2.1.1 Business case on costs of accidents and work related ill health to local authorities - Steve Sumner reported that he had obtained costs in relation to fatals, major and other reportable accidents. He agreed to establish whether "society costs" are incorporated within employer costs; and that he hoped to break down ill-health absence costs further to try and highlight those in relation to unitary authorities.

ACTION: Steve Sumner

2.1.1(i) Members discussed ways of disseminating this valuable information e.g. discussions with officials, incorporated within LA and EO publications, Annual reports and safety practitioner's publication.

2.1.2 HSE Stakeholders conference – Attendees had misgivings, including the way it had been planned and who had been targeted. It was agreed comments would be sent to Secretariat, to raise internally within HSE.

ACTION: Members/HSE Secretariat.

2.1.3 Union sponsored elected members letter – (circulated letter to members) Paul Barnsley advised that this would shortly be sent to elected members (including Scotland and Wales).

2.1.3(i) Chief Executives Letter - Members were advised that approximately 180 letters were sent to Chief Executives and 11 responses had been received. It was agreed the responses constituted good practice and hopefully could be cascaded via the newly formed Employers Organisation website. TU Side advised that there should have been approx. 400 letters to Chief Executives. HSE Secretariat to look into the matter.

ACTION: Mandy Wright/HSE Secretariat

2.1.4 Meeting with Government Officials – Members were advised of the meetings scheduled with Officials:

23 July 2002 – Edinburgh

1 August 2002 – London

8 August 2002 – Cardiff

Members agreed to review meetings.

ACTION: HSE Secretariat

2.1.5 National Joint Agreement – Steve Sumner advised that due to unforeseen circumstances he could not indicate a timescale for completion. He still hoped to take forward the commitment to include a section on health and safety.

ACTION: Steve Sumner

2.1.6 Elected members' roles and responsibilities – Secretariat had sought advice from HSE Solicitor which is relayed below:

*"Historically, HSE knows of no case where elected members have been prosecuted individually. However, HSE is aware that the decision making process within Councils is changing such that elected members may make decisions ahead of committee agreement. These decisions may have health and safety implications.*

*Where such decision making occurs, the Council should have systems in place to ensure that any decision made is in line with the Councils own policies and procedures relating to health and safety.*

*Depending on the facts of an individual case it may be possible that elected members could be prosecuted under Section 36 of the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974. Ultimately however, this would be a matter for the courts to decide. HSE cannot provide the LA Forum or individual local authorities with legal advice as to health and safety law. So it would be up to individual local authorities to seek their own independent legal advice on this matter."*

2.1.6(i) Hugh circulated draft guidance aimed at councillors. Members to send comments to Hugh by the end of August and he will recirculate amended version to members.

ACTION: All Members

2.1.6(ii) Hugh Robertson tabled the Contract Research Report 2002 and asked if relevant data could be extracted to inform LG statistics. Secretariat agreed to consider.

ACTION:HSE Secretariat

2.1.7 Development of standards – Debbie Thiara advised members of the “terms and conditions” of the Invest to Save Scheme. Members agreed that the bid would need to be robust to succeed and therefore it was decided the original working party would undertake the preparatory work and establish costings and report back at the next meeting.

ACTION: Hugh Robertson, Mandy Wright & Steve Sumner

2.1.7(i) Health and safety Best Value Performance Indicators (BVPs) – Mandy Wright advised that a Council had been selected and was currently piloting the BVPs. Mandy to update at the next meeting.

ACTION: Mandy Wright

2.1.7(ii) Jonathan Lloyd agreed to provide HSE Secretariat with the performance indicators on Occupational Health used in Wales.

ACTION: Jonathan Lloyd

2.1.8 LAs annual award for innovation – Steve Sumner reported he had been unable to pursue possible funding via the CHAS Scheme for an annual award for innovations by LAs in meeting RHS targets. Members discussed other options, an award within the Local Government Awards under a separate category. Steve and Hugh agreed to explore this and report back.

ACTION: Hugh Robertson/Steve Sumner

2.1.9 Penwith District Council's Achievement – An article giving details of senior management completing IOSH Course has been published in, “Public Services News”. John Holden agreed to arrange for members to be placed on the mailing list.

The latest copy of the Public Services News will be circulated with the minutes. ACTION: John Holden

2.1.1.0 IOSH Safety Courses – John Holden forwarded the syllabus for a course for elected members. This was circulated with the agenda papers. Members provided comments to help improve the course content.

**3. FEEDBACK ON REFUSE COLLECTION VEHICLES AND THE INTRODUCTION OF CCTV**

3.1 Members considered Paper (LAFORUM 03/02) entitled, “The application of PUWER’98 regulation 28(e) to Refuse Collection Vehicles. After discussion it was agreed HSE would re-draft its proposed guidance, taking on board members comments, and then re-circulating for further comment.

ACTION: HSE Secretariat

**4. FEEDBACK ON REFUSE COLLECTION RESEARCH REPORT ON MANUAL HANDLING, VIOLENCE ETC**

4.1 HSE has engaged an independent researcher to evaluate both GMB/Sita and HSL research with a view to making recommendations. To discuss the way forward at the next meeting.

ACTION: HSE Secretariat

**5. PROGRESS REPORT ON THE WORKPLAN**

5.1 Members discussed progress with the workplan. Good progress had been achieved since the Forum came into being. As to next steps, the main issues to consider were:

- \* To keep the forum as strategic as possible
- \* Evaluation
- \* Taking stock after meetings with officials
- \* Count down to 2004, e.g. devise a poster indicating National targets and individual LA targets.

Members felt it would be useful if HSE was able to interact with Chief Executives on RHS. HSE Secretariat agreed to consider how feasible this would be.

Members were advised of the budgeting periods and that if organisations wanted the LA Forum/HSE to participate in jointly funded events then HSE needed the information at the start of the bidding process in October for events in the following financial year.

ACTION: All Members

**6. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

6.1 Safety Representatives Charter – The Forum agreed this principle

but realised it needed to liaise with the Education IACs (HIFEAC and SEAC) who were developing it. It was agreed Steve Sumner would do this on behalf of the Forum.

ACTION: Steve Sumner

6.2 Woodworking – Robert invited comments from members on the paper (LAFORUM 04/02) entitled, “The application of PUWER’98 braking requirements for woodworking machines for use in schools and colleges”. Members agreed with the recommendations.

Jonathan Lloyd mentioned that in Wales guidance on this topic has been produced by “DATALL”. Copy to be sent to HSE Secretariat for circulation to members.

ACTION: Jonathan Lloyd

6.3 Good Practice Guide - The “Good Practice Guide on Health and Safety in the Civil Service” was circulated with the agenda papers. Members were asked if they thought it appropriate to adapt to LAs. Steve Sumner said that LAs were further forward than the issues raised in the Guide. However, he agreed to look at the document and extract useful information to include in a guide that he was developing on Revitalising Health and Safety for LAs.

ACTION: Steve Sumner

6.4 Best Value Guidance – Mandy said that she was aware of a consultation document being developed on the Best Value and that she will be involved in some discussions on it. She agreed to advise the HSE Secretariat once it was launched, so that the Forum may have the opportunity to include health and safety text in the guidance.

ACTION: Mandy Wright

6.5 Steve Sumner informed members that a group had been formed within the Local Authority specific to RHS. A copy of the terms of reference for the group will be sent to HSE Secretariat for circulation. LA Forum to link with the group and feed into their website.

ACTION: Steve Sumner/HSE Secretariat

## **7. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

29 November 2002

**Close**