

**The Highland Council  
Joint Consultation Group's Central Safety Committee**

Minutes of Meeting of the Joint Consultation Group's Central Safety Committee held in Council Headquarters, Glenurquhart Road, Inverness on Friday 28 June, 2013 at 12.20 p.m.

**Present**

**Employer's Representatives:**

Dr D Alston  
Mr H Morrison

**Staff Side Representatives:**

Mr A Wemyss, UNITE  
Mr R Selkirk, GMB  
Mr C Cameron, UCATT

Ms M Macrae, RCN  
Mr C Parr, UNISON (substitute)

**Officials in attendance:**

Ms M Morris, Assistant Chief Executive  
Ms G Falconer, Health, Safety and Wellbeing Manager, Chief Executive's Service  
Mr R Whyte, Regional Officer, UNITE  
Mrs S Lunn, Business Support Manager, Planning and Development Service  
Mr W Munro, Nairn and Badenoch & Strathspey Joint Health and Safety Working Group  
Mr A MacInnes, Administrative Assistant, Chief Executive's Service

**1. Appointment of Interim Chair**

In the absence of the Chair and Vice-Chair, it was unanimously agreed that Mr A Wemyss take the Chair.

**2. Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Mr D Fallows, Mr F Parr and Mr D Mackay of the Employer's Side, Mr W Erskine, Unison, Ms E Caithness, RCN and Mr M Haymer, GMB of the Staff Side and Ms D Grant, Caithness, Sutherland & Easter Ross Health & Safety Working Group.

**3. Declarations of Interest**

The Sub Committee **NOTED** that there were no declarations of interest expressed.

#### 4. Minutes of Last Meeting

There had been circulated for confirmation, Minutes of the last meeting of the Sub-Committee held on 8 March, 2013 which were **APPROVED**.

Arising from the minutes the following matters were raised:-

Carr's Corner Depot Fort William – **NOTED** that an update report on the current and proposed actions to improve the Carr's Corner depot main yard area would be submitted to the next meeting of the Sub-Committee.

Health and Social Care Service trade union liaison meetings – it had been suggested that after these meetings, health and safety issues be discussed. The Staff Side advised that they intended to request that health and safety issues be a formal agenda item at these meetings and would raise this matter at the next Health and Social Care Service trade union liaison meeting.

#### 5. Minutes of Area Health and Safety Groups

There had been circulated for information, Minutes of Meeting of:

- i. Caithness, Sutherland & Easter Ross Health & Safety Working Group held on 6 June, 2013;
- ii. Inverness, Nairn, Badenoch & Strathspey Joint Health and Safety Working Group held on 14 June, 2013; and
- iii. Ross, Skye & Lochaber Health and Safety Working Group held on 6 June, 2013.

The Sub Committee **NOTED** the minutes as circulated.

#### 6. Planning and Development Service – Annual Health and Safety Report

There was circulated Report No.CSC/8/13 by the Director of Planning and Development which outlined the health and safety situation in the Planning and Development Service in 2012/13 and the proposals for 2013/14.

The report highlighted the main health and safety risks faced by Planning and Development staff. It was noted that a Service Health and Safety committee with trade union representatives was in the process of being set up and the first quarterly meeting was scheduled for August, 2013. There had been no health and safety accidents recorded in 2012/13 and an annual reminder was issued to all staff about the need to report accidents and the process for doing this. Details of health and safety training for staff was provided and it was noted that the corporate health and safety policy had been issued to all staff within the Service.

The report concluded by advising of health and safety achievements over the last 12 months and details of a health and safety action plan for the next 12 months was also provided.

The Sub-Committee **NOTED** the contents of the report.

## **7. Health and Safety Team: Update on Current Health and Safety Issues**

There had been circulated Report No. CSC/9/13 by the Assistant Chief Executive providing an update on several current health and safety issues and developments.

The report detailed health and safety executive issues and various current projects relating to health and safety issues and developments, including:-

- Internal Audit had completed a health and safety audit within the Council;
- As part of the health and safety management system review a number of new policies had been developed and others reviewed;
- As part of the portfolio of information to support all staff in the prevention and management of stress and mental health in the workplace a publication “Stress – a little book of advice” had been prepared;
- Following recent fires in Houses of Multiple Occupation a meeting was convened with Housing and Property Services, Licensing, Environmental Health and the Fire Service to ensure a comprehensive approach to fire safety in those premises where Housing staff placed vulnerable, homeless clients;
- The Council had been an integral player in the development of The Scottish Manual Handling Training Passport and Information Scheme;
- The development of the Employee Health and Wellbeing Strategy (part of the requirements of the Healthy Working Lives Gold Award) had been delayed as the Gold Award criteria had been amended;

The Sub-Committee **NOTED** the updated information on health and safety issues and developments contained in the report.

## **8. Occupational Health Report**

There was circulated Report No. CSC/10/13 by the Assistant Chief Executive which provided an overview of the work undertaken by RS Occupational Health for the period January 2013 – March 2013.

The report provided a breakdown of the management referrals, occupational health surveillance and other activities undertaken in this period.

In particular it was noted that 64 out of the 130 cases referred were for mental health issues. Managers should ensure that the prevention of workplace stress is a priority and that risk assessments have been undertaken and action plans in place. A new mandatory training course for Managers on Mentally Healthy Workplaces was now available from Employee Development. An e-learning training course on this was also available for all staff. An outline of the training course would be circulated to the Sub-

Committee.

The Committee **NOTED** the contents of the report.

## 9. **Review of The Highland Council's Health and Safety Management System**

There was circulated Report No. CSC/11/13 by the Assistant Chief Executive which informed that there was a commitment in the 2011/2012 Health and Safety Annual Report to review the policies and procedures in the Council's health and safety management system and identify any gaps and also ensure that the advice was up to date.

The report summarised policies and guidance that have been developed as a result of this exercise, namely:- Fire Safety Management; Health and Safety Training; Health Surveillance and Radon. It was advised that adoption of these documents would help to meet the Council's legal requirements in terms of health and safety and help minimise any risk arising.

In terms of the Fire Safety Management Policy, fire risk assessment action plans would be monitored at Area/Service Health and Safety Working Groups. It was intended to submit guidance to these working groups on their monitoring role.

In relation to Health and Safety training, the Staff Side advised that there were staff in Housing and Property who had not received asbestos awareness training or working at height training. In particular new employees in housing and property should receive asbestos training straight away. It was hoped that the Council were now entering a period of providing more health and safety training for staff. In response, it was advised that if working with asbestos was identified as being part of their job, employees should receive training on this as part of their package of induction training. This issue would be raised with the Housing and Property Service and the Staff Side intended to raise the issue at the Service Health and Safety Working Group.

Further, once the policy on training had been through Committee, it would be discussed at Area/Service Health and Safety Working Groups which would raise awareness of the importance of health and safety training. Health and Safety training was a priority and always had been.

In terms of Health Surveillance, the Staff Side asked if Managers could be made more aware of their responsibilities insofar as health surveillance of employees was concerned. In response it was advised that a training course on management of health and safety was being developed and health surveillance would be included in this. The Staff Side felt that this training course should be mandatory for Managers given its importance and the Sub-Committee were supportive of this suggestion.

The Sub-Committee **AGREED** that these policy and guidance documents be submitted to the Finance, Housing and Resources Committee on 28<sup>th</sup> August

2013 for approval, in line with the Council's Policy on Health and Safety Consultation.

The meeting ended at 1.00 p.m.