

## AGENDA ITEM 20.ii

### The Highland Council Central Safety Committee

Minutes of Meeting of the Central Safety Committee held in Council Headquarters, Glenurquhart Road, Inverness on Thursday 12 December, 2013 at 11.45 a.m.

#### Present

#### Employer's Representatives:

Mr D Fallows  
Mr F Parr

Mr D Mackay

#### Staff Side Representatives:

Mr M Hayes, UNISON  
Mr A Wemyss, UNITE  
Mr D Griffiths, GMB

Mr C Cameron, UCATT  
Mr J Rosie, UNITE (observer) (by video conference)

#### Officials in attendance:

Mr J Batchelor, Head of Human Resources, Chief Executive's Service  
Ms G Falconer, Health, Safety and Wellbeing Manager, Chief Executive's Service  
Mr R Whyte, Regional Officer, UNITE  
Mr R MacKenzie, Head of Support Services, Education, Culture & Sport Service  
Mr S Duncan, Property Risk Management Officer, Housing and Property Service  
Mr C Kemp, Area Roads & Community Works Manager, TEC Services  
Ms J Baines, Development Officer, Additional Support Needs, ECS  
Mr A Macmanus (substitute - by video conference), Caithness, Sutherland & Easter Ross Health & Safety Working Group.  
Mr A MacInnes, Administrative Assistant, Chief Executive's Service

#### Mr A Wemyss in the Chair

#### 1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Dr D Alston (other Council business) and Mr H Morrison (other Council business) of the Employer's Side, Ms E Caithness, RCN of the Staff Side, Ms D Grant, Caithness, Sutherland & Easter Ross Health & Safety Working Group and Mr W Munro, Nairn and Badenoch & Strathspey Joint Health and Safety Working Group.

#### 2. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

### 3. Minutes of Last Meeting

There had been circulated for confirmation, Minutes of the last meeting of the Sub-Committee held on 6 September, 2013 the terms of which were **APPROVED**.

Arising from the Minutes, the following matters were raised:-

Item 1 – Appointment of Chair and Vice-Chair – It was **NOTED** that Mr A Wemyss, UNITE was the Staff Side's nomination for the Chair of the Committee.

Item 8 – Education, Culture and Sport (ECS) Service Health and Safety Report-

Equipment in Schools - it was reported that the ECS Service were currently trying to identify suitable premises for storing equipment in the 'Peter Pan Nursery' in Inverness, as the current arrangements were not adequate. ECS were also looking at the system for administering equipment in schools and it was proposed to asset tag every piece of equipment to allow monitoring of where the equipment was e.g. in storage or in use in a School.

Maintenance of Equipment in School Playgrounds – it was reported that ECS had arranged an annual inspection contract with Dunlop Play to inspect equipment in school playgrounds. This was the same company that inspected play equipment in public parks. The contract was to inspect the equipment, but not maintain it, and it was the Head Teacher's responsibility to instruct any remedial works. The inspection contract applied across Highland, but it was less clear as to what follow-up maintenance work required to be undertaken.

The Committee **NOTED** that the Head of Support Services, ECS would liaise with the Transport, Environmental and Community Service as to the extent of the follow-up maintenance work required to be undertaken of equipment in school playgrounds.

### 4. 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 22 November, 2013;
- ii. Inverness, Nairn, Badenoch & Strathspey Joint Health and Safety Working Group held on 29 November, 2013; and
- iii. Ross, Skye & Lochaber Health and Safety Working Group held on 7 November, 2013.

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

Arising from the minutes the following matters were raised:-

Caithness, Sutherland & Easter Ross Health & Safety Working Group held on 22 November, 2013

Trade Union Health and Safety representatives had carried out an inspection of the Girnigoe Street Offices in March, 2013 and were to do an update Inspection on 23 December, 2013.

There had been an issue in relation to emergency lighting in the Girnigoe Street Offices in that there wasn't access to test the emergency lighting or any proof that the lighting had been tested. A contractor had now checked the lights and these inspections would be monitored in future.

**5. Carr's Corner Depot Fort William**

There was circulated Report No. CSC/18/13 by the Director of Transport, Environmental and Community Services which provided an update on the prioritisation of health and safety expenditure on TECS depots, making specific reference to the availability of funding for measures to improve the condition of the surface of the depot yard at Carr's Corner, Fort William.

It was advised that surface maintenance works had been carried out at Carr's Corner in the interim period to deal with potholes and surface water to ensure the area was kept safe. The cost of upgrading the surface at the yard and approach road had been estimated at £84,000. There was an annual provision within the Council's capital programme for £100,000 towards depot improvements and the 2013/14 budget had already been allocated. Current priorities for depots was detailed, which were based on eliminating risks to the workforce, principally by reducing the risk of falls from heights, slips and trips and vehicle movements. The works to the surface at Carr's Corner was planned to take place in 2015/16 and 2016/17.

The Staff Side tabled photographs of the Carr's Corner yard which showed the poor condition that the surface of the yard was in. The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 placed a duty on the Employer to provide a safe ingress and egress to the Employee's place of work and there was concern that the condition of the yard posed a health and safety risk to employees. It was felt that the interim remedial work to the surface was inadequate and it was queried what the costs were of the ongoing maintenance works, as the longer the yard was left in this condition the more it would cost in the long term. The problems with the surface had been an issue for some considerable time and the view of the Group was that action should be taken to improve the surface now for the safety of the workforce and not wait until 2015/16 and 2016/17.

Thereafter, the Committee **AGREED** that the Director of Transport, Environmental and Community Services liaise with the Director of Finance in order to identify funding to enable the planned improvements to the Carr's Corner depot to be completed as a matter of urgency.

## **6. Education, Culture and Sport Service Health and Safety Report**

The Head of Support Services, Education, Culture and Sport Service advised that the Education, Culture and Sport Service Health, Safety and Wellbeing Policy had been approved by the Adult and Children's Services Committee. A Health and Safety manual for the Service would now be produced and it was intended to report progress on producing the manual to this Committee on a regular basis over the next 12 months.

Also, in moving towards an integrated Care and Learning Service there would be greater collaboration between the Health and Social Care Service and the Education, Culture and Sport Service. The Health, Safety and Wellbeing Policy document for the ECS Service would be used as a template for the Care and Learning Service and the scope of the Health and Safety manual would be widened to include the Care and Learning Service.

The Committee **NOTED** that progress on the Health and Safety manual for the ECS Service and the new Care and Learning Service would be submitted to future meetings.

## **7. Use of CALM (Crises Aggression Limitation Method) by The Highland Council**

There was circulated Report No. CSC/20/13 by the Development Officer Additional Support Needs which provided an overview of the work carried out to merge CALM approaches and systems across Integrated Children's Services. In addition it outlined the plans to create a transitions process for the use of physical transitions process in adult services.

It was advised that since reporting to the Committee in December, 2012 progress had been made in moving all Children's Service's behaviour approaches to the methodology used by the Promoting Positive Relationships Team. Throughout 2013, the Coordinator of the Children's Service (ECS) Promoting Positive Relationships Team had been meeting with the CALM trainers from Social Work Services. The teams from Social Work Services and ECS had now been fully merged. The first joint training had taken place in Caithness delivered by trainers from both services. There was also now a detailed database of all establishments using CALM in Children's Services. An audit process had been introduced and was monitored by both CALM Services and the Promoting Positive Relationship team.

In terms of the transitions to Adult Services, a multi service e-mail discussion had taken place on how to transition plan for young people who have had behaviour protocols in place in schools and respite centres and for whom CALM holds are part of the strategies used. The need for a working group to progress a transitions pathway had been agreed and integrated Children's services trainers had been identified to join this Group. A draft pathway had been written as a starting point for the group. It was advised that if there were any problems with progress on the transitions pathway this could be discussed at the Integration Care of the Highlands Programme Board.

The Committee **NOTED** the information contained in the report.

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

There had been circulated Report No. CSC/21/13 by the Head of Human Resources 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:-

- The Improvement Notice issued to the Council in October, 2012 with respect to the failure to comply with the requirements of the Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2007 had now been lifted. A significant amount of work had gone into the lifting of the Notice and there had been a very positive response from the HSE to the lifting of the Improvement Notice who advised that the system introduced had been well received by those using it and the overall outcome was very much a positive one.
- A briefing note had been issued to all Managers outlining the changes to the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 1995 (RIDDOR);
- Section 69 of the Enterprise and Regulatory Reform Act 2013 came into effect on 1 October, 2013 and amended the Health and Safety at Work, etc. Act 1974 to the effect that claims for compensation for workplace incidents could only be made when negligence could be proved.
- The Health and Safety (First Aid) Regulations 1981 had also been amended. The HSE would no longer approve first aid training providers and qualifications. Additional guidance had been issued for procuring health and safety training and this had been shared with Employee Development who were about to go out to tender for first aid training providers.
- Health and safety management system updates were provided on the Managing Smoking at Work Policy and First Aid at Work.
- The Council had been awarded the Healthy Working Lives Mental Health Commendation Award as a result of the work undergone to raise awareness of mental health and stress issues in the organisation.
- A number of events had been held across the Council area to mark Stress Awareness Day 2013 on 6<sup>th</sup> November, 2013.
- Health, Safety and Wellbeing guidance currently under review, included – Management of Stress, Water management (including legionella), and Health and safety in procurement/commissioning.

The Sub-Committee **NOTED** the updated information on health and safety

issues and developments contained in the report.

## **9. Occupational Health Report**

There was circulated Report No. CSC/22/13 by the Head of Human Resources which provided an overview of the work undertaken by RS Occupational Health (RSOH) for the period July, 2013 – September, 2013.

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

The Committee **NOTED** the information contained in the report.

## **10. Responsible Premises Officers' Handbook**

There was circulated Report No. CSC/23/13 by the Head of Human Resources which introduced the Council's Responsible Premises Officers' (RPO) Handbook which had been developed to assist RPOs understand the role expected of them when managing property-related health and safety issues. The handbook included general information on a range of property-related topics, advice on record keeping and where RPOs can get further support, information and training. The handbook would be available on the Health, Safety and Wellbeing Intranet site and also as a printed version.

It was advised that trade union safety representative's and managers would be encouraged to undertake workplace inspections together. Also, Head Teachers were assisted in their role as RPOs by Facilities Management Assistants and it was queried if there was any scope in having a modified version of the Handbook for schools. It was advised that consideration would be given to this, but on the understanding that Head Teachers were still legally responsible as RPOs and not the Facilities Management Assistants.

The Committee **APPROVED** the Responsible Premises' Handbook.

## **11. Dyslexia Strategy**

There was circulated Report No. CSC/24/13 by the Head of Human Resources which introduced a strategy for the management and support of employees with dyslexia.

The strategy aimed to raise awareness of the issue of dyslexia in the workplace; identify pathways for assisting employees receiving appropriate assessments; and to give advice and support to managers and staff in identifying reasonable adjustments in the workplace. Awareness sessions for managers and trade union health and safety representatives would be organised for early in 2014. This would be delivered by the Literacies Team and the Health, Safety and Wellbeing Team.

The Committee:-

- i **NOTED** the information contained in the report; and
- ii **APPROVED** the strategy for the management and support of employees with dyslexia.

## 12. **Healthy Working Lives – Gold Submission**

There was circulated Report No. CSC/25/13 by the Head of Human Resources which advised that in order to progress to the Healthy Working Lives Gold Award, the Highland Council required to prepare a Strategy for Employee Health and Wellbeing (which should be based on the results of a health needs assessment) supported by an annual plan. The report proposed such a strategy and provided an analysis of the results of the health needs assessment which was issued in February 2013.

Following consideration, the Committee **APPROVED** the report, action plan and strategy for Employee Health and Wellbeing.

## 13. **AOCB**

Radon Monitoring – It was advised that the Council had carried out Radon monitoring tests. Initial results showed that four buildings were above action levels – two in Helmsdale and two in Fort Augustus. The next round of testing would involve residential and school properties. A further update would be provided to the next meeting of the Committee.

The meeting ended at 12.45 p.m.

**Date of Next Meeting – Friday, 7 February, 2014**