

**The Highland Council**  
**Central Safety Committee**

Minutes of Meeting of the Central Safety Committee held in the Council Chamber, Council Headquarters, Glenurquhart Road, Inverness on Friday 14 August, 2015 at 11.45 a.m.

**Present:**

**Employer's Representatives:**

Mr B Fernie	Mr D MacKay
Mr A MacKinnon	Mr H Morrison (by telephone conference)

**Staff Side Representatives:**

Mr M Hayes, UNISON	Mr D Griffiths, GMB
Mr A Wemyss, UNITE	Mr C Cameron, UCATT

**In attendance:**

Mr J Batchelor, Head of People and Performance, Corporate Development Service  
Ms G Falconer, Occupational Health, Safety and Wellbeing Manager, Corporate Development Service  
Mr I Jackson, Education Officer, Care and Learning Service  
Mr C Clark, Head of Environmental and Regulatory Services, Community Services  
Mr S Duncan, Property Risk Management Officer, Development & Infrastructure Service  
Mr W Munro, Inverness, Nairn and Badenoch & Strathspey Operational Area Health and Safety Working Group  
Mr A MacInnes, Administrative Assistant, Corporate Development Service

**1. Appointment of Chair and Vice Chair**

The Committee was informed that, in terms of its Membership and Remit, following an Election of Councillors and annually thereafter, it was required to appoint a Chair and Vice Chair from amongst its members. If the Chair appointed was one of the Employer's representatives, the Vice-Chair should be one of the Staff Side representatives, and vice versa.

Mr M Hayes, seconded by Mr H Morrison, moved that Mr B Fernie be appointed as Chair. There being no other nominations, Mr Fernie was duly appointed and took the Chair.

It was **AGREED** that the Staff Side would advise of their nomination for Vice-Chair and report back. Mr M Hayes would undertake the Vice-Chair role for the Staff Side in the interim.

**2. Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Mr F Parr of the Employer's Side and Ms D Grant, Caithness, Sutherland & Easter Ross Health & Safety Working Group.

### 3. **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

### 4. **Minutes of Last Meeting**

There had been circulated Minutes of the last meeting of the Committee held on 15 May, 2015, the terms of which were **APPROVED**.

### 5. **Matters Arising from the Minutes**

There were no matters arising from the Minutes.

### 6. **Minutes of Area Health and Safety Groups**

There had been circulated, for information, the Minutes of the:-

- i. Inverness, Nairn, Badenoch & Strathspey Joint Health and Safety Working Group held on 3 August, 2015;
- ii. Caithness, Sutherland and Easter Ross Health and Safety Working Group held on 4 June, 2015;
- iii. Ross, Skye and Lochaber Health and Safety Group held on 18 June, 2015.

The Committee **NOTED** the Minutes.

Arising from the minutes, it was queried if Elected Members of this Committee were entitled to attend Area Health and Safety Group meetings, as if they were involved they could help resolve some of the issues at an early stage. It was confirmed that Elected Members of this Committee were entitled to attend these meetings, and that dates of Area Health and Safety Groups meetings would be sent to them.

### 7. **Community Services Health Safety and Wellbeing Policy**

There had been circulated Report No. CSC/12/15 by the Director of Community Services which sought the Committee's endorsement of the new Community Service's Health, Safety and Wellbeing Policy.

The main focus in the policy had been clarifying the responsibilities and accountability for health and safety amongst staff in Community Services. The input from trade union representatives in developing the policy was greatly appreciated.

Following consideration, the Committee **APPROVED** the Community Service's Health, Safety, and Wellbeing Policy.

### 8. **Care and Learning Service Health and Safety Policy**

There had been circulated Report No. CSC/13/15 by the Director of Care and Learning which sought the Committee's agreement to the new Health and Safety Policy for the Care and Learning Service.

In particular the Service would develop, monitor and review a Health, Safety and Wellbeing Plan. The aim of the plan would be to maintain legal compliance and deliver constant improvement in the standards of Health, Safety and Wellbeing across the Service.

The Policy would be reviewed on an annual basis and any comments on it would be taken into account during that review.

It was advised that the monitoring and auditing of the Health, Safety and Wellbeing Plan was important and it was queried if a monitoring protocol was already in place. In response, now that the Policy had been developed, the next stage would be the monitoring and development of the Health, Safety and Wellbeing Plan, which would be done as soon as possible through the Service's Health and Safety Group which had been re-established.

The Committee:-

- i **APPROVED** the content of the new Policy; and
- ii **NOTED** that an annual report and action plan would be submitted to a future Committee.

#### **9. Health, Safety and Wellbeing Team: Update on Current Health, Safety and Wellbeing Issues**

There was circulated Report No. CSC/14/15 by the Head of People and Performance which provided an update on current health and safety issues and developments in relation to Health and Safety Executive Issues; Health and safety management system updates; Radon Management and Projects.

In terms of the two Improvement Notices on the Council in respect of the management of hand arm vibration, it was queried if the Council had to apply to get a further extension to comply with the notices. It was confirmed that the HSE Inspector had agreed to an extension to the improvement notices, but that there would not be a requirement for a return visit from HSE, and the Inspector would accept written confirmation on the areas still to be addressed.

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

#### **10. Health, Safety and Wellbeing Team: Revised Health, Safety and Wellbeing Policies**

There had been circulated Report No. CSC/15/15 by the Head of People & Performance providing an update on the recent developments in the Health and Safety Management System: revised guidance on Managing Hand Arm Vibration Syndrome, revised guidance on User of Display Screen Equipment and new guidance on Purchasing/hiring of Plant/equipment.

In discussion, the comment was made that when purchasing and hiring equipment and when looking at the instructions to use them, it should be recognised that these instructions did not mean that the equipment complied with the Vibration Regulations 2005. It was hoped therefore that when purchasing and hiring equipment, Managers were not relying on what it said in the instructions in terms of vibration and that further

testing on the equipment should be undertaken to ensure that they conformed with the Vibration Regulations. It was advised that the approach being recommended to Services was to trial equipment prior to purchasing.

In terms of Hand Arm Vibration, it was noted that at the last meeting of the Committee that some employees particularly in Building Maintenance were using their own equipment which could be out of date with excessive vibration, and it was queried if any progress had been made to stop this practice. It was confirmed that in Building Maintenance, Management had instructed that employees own power tools were not to be used for work purposes, and that equipment should be centrally purchased. The Staff Side advised that this instruction had not been relayed all employees in Building Maintenance. The Occupational Health, Safety and Wellbeing Manager undertook to address this with the Service.

In terms of the Display Screen Equipment training, it was queried if this looked specifically at laptops. It was advised that it was intended to include laptops in the e-learning training course. Also, the guidance includes information on the safe use of laptops and other hand held devices.

The Committee **AGREED**:-

- i the revision to the documents on Managing Hand Arm Vibration Syndrome, revised guidance on User of Display Screen Equipment and new guidance on Purchasing/Hiring of Plant/Equipment; and
- ii to ensure that the instruction that employees in Building Maintenance not to use their own power tools would be disseminated to all staff in Building Maintenance.

## **11. Occupational Health Report**

There had been circulated Report No. CSC/16/15 by the Head of People & Performance which provided an overview of the work undertaken by RS Occupational Health for the period April – June, 2015.

It was advised that there had been a total of 158 management referrals seen by the RS Occupational Health Service during the period, with 66 of these cases for mental health issues. Directors were urged to ensure that the prevention of workplace stress was a priority and that stress risk assessments have been undertaken and action plans in place.

The contract with RS Occupational Health was nearing its end. Work was being undertaken with the Procurement team to look at the reprovision of Occupational Health Services for the next few years.

At the last meeting of the Committee it was noted that work would be undertaken with Services to identify the reasons for employees not turning up for Occupational Health Service appointments. At the Ross, Skye and Lochaber Area Health and Safety Consultation Group meeting on 18 June, 2015, it was noted that the mileage rate to attend Occupational Health appointments was around 16p per mile. This was distinctly different from the business mileage rate of 45p per mile and perhaps this was something that could be taken into consideration when looking at Occupational Health Service appointments, as particularly when it was a

management referral, it was part of your duty of employment to attend the Occupational Health appointment. The Head of People and Performance undertook to look at this issue and report back.

The Committee **NOTED**:

- i the information contained in the report; and
- ii that the Head of People and Performance would report back to the next meeting on the issue of different rates for Occupational Health and Business mileage.

The meeting concluded at 12.15 pm.

**Date of Next Meeting – Friday, 30 October, 2015 at 11.45 a.m.**