

The Highland Council

Central Safety Committee

Minutes of Meeting of the Central Safety Committee held in Council Headquarters, Glenurquhart Road, Inverness on Friday 20 January, 2017 at 11.45 a.m.

Present:

Employer's Representatives:

Mr A MacKinnon
Mr F Parr

Staff Side Representatives:

Mr M Hayes, UNISON
Mr A Wemyss, UNITE
Mr D Griffiths, GMB
Mr D Morrison, UCATT (substitute)

In attendance:

Mr S Walsh, Head of People and Transformation, Corporate Development Service
Ms G Falconer, Occupational Health, Safety and Wellbeing Manager, Corporate Development Service
Ms T Urry, Head of Roads & Transport, 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

Mr A MacKinnon in the Chair

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Mr B Fernie, Dr D Alston and Mrs M Smith from the Employer's Side and Mr M Murphy from the Staff Side.

2. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

3. Minutes of Last Meeting

There had been circulated Minutes of the last meeting of the Committee held on 4 November, 2016, the terms of which were **APPROVED**.

4. Matters Arising from the Minutes

There were no matters arising from the minutes.

5. 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 21 December, 2016;
- ii. Caithness, Sutherland and Easter Ross Health and Safety Working Group held on 1 December, 2016; and
- iii. Ross, Skye and Lochaber Health and Safety Group held on 1 December, 2016.

Arising from the Minutes the following matters were raised:-

i Depots review affecting building maintenance – it was noted that the Director of Community Services was to provide a written update next week on the review to the Staff Side.

ii Service Representation at Area Health and Safety Groups – the Occupational Health, Safety and Wellbeing Manager undertook to write to Directors reminding them of the importance for their Service to be represented at Area Health and Safety Group meetings.

iii Identification Cards (ID) – the Civic & Facilities Team Leader, Town House had been developing a standard format for ID cards as there did not seem to be a standard format for identifying who was a staff member or who was a visitor. In this respect, it was queried if there was a security policy for buildings within the Council and there was a need for a corporate decision on how to identify a member of staff from a visitor.

It was advised that photographic ID was used by Services particularly where staff were undertaking duties outwith their normal place of work, but it was unclear if support staff had ID throughout the organisation. Also, the Care and Learning Service had a security policy which set out the aspirations of the Council to control access to schools which could be used as a guide for any review on the use of ID. There was also reference to security in the Responsible Premises Officers manual, but there did not seem to be an Officer in the Council with overall responsibility for security matters.

The Chair undertook to raise the issue of the need for a corporate policy on staff and visitor identification with the Chief Executive and he would report back to the Committee on the outcome of that discussion.

The Committee otherwise **NOTED** the Area Health and Safety Group Minutes.

6. Health Safety and Wellbeing Policy for Community Services

There was circulated Report No. CSC/1/17 by the Director of Community Services which updated Members on changes to responsibilities for Health Safety and Wellbeing for Community Services following Service restructuring. Changes to the management team following restructuring in April 2016 had resulted in the need to review section 5 of the policy, namely the reduction from 8 to 4 senior managers and the changes in job titles.

The Committee **NOTED** the changes to responsibilities in the Occupational Health Safety and Wellbeing Policy for Community Services following Service restructuring.

7. Health, Safety and Wellbeing Team: Update on Current Health, Safety and Wellbeing Issues

There was circulated Report No. CSC/2/17 by the Head of People and Transformation which provided an update on current health and safety issues and developments in relation to Health and Safety Executive issues concerning Inverness Royal Academy, Hand Arm Vibration and the Scottish Plan of Action for Safety and Health; and the report also covered Health and Safety management system updates and other relevant issues.

In particular an update was provided in relation to the action taken to address the three Improvement Notices served by the Health and Safety Executive on the Inverness Royal Academy project. A summary of the Improvement Notices was circulated at the meeting which detailed the enforcement action taken against the three companies involved in the project. These were client obligations to be undertaken which also had implications for the Council to commission resources to manage and scrutinise the project. The status of the Improvement Notices was 'Ongoing' and the Council were still waiting to hear from the Health and Safety Executive as to why the Notices had not been closed off, but it was suspected it was due to further complications in the gas installation.

In relation to the Wick Campus project, there had been a meeting held earlier today with the Scottish Futures Trust as there had been disagreement about the status of practical completion of this project. The Council had concerns over documentation in relation to Gas/Electricity certification which did not accurately reflect the gas and electricity installation on site. The Council were instigating measures to challenge this. However, given the practical completion of the project, the building had been handed over to the Council, but that commissioning was still ongoing and outstanding works were still being carried out and the Council were monitoring these works and ensuring that the certification was correct.

Members expressed their concern on the situation with these projects and there was a need to ensure that the schools would not be occupied until the problems had been fully resolved and the buildings were safe to use. It was confirmed that the Council was taking this matter very seriously and an Information Bulletin was soon to be issued by the Head of Resources, Care and Learning providing progress on the projects, which should provide reassurance to Members.

Having heard the Chair advise that he would meet with the Director of Care and Learning to express the Committee's concerns with the problems being experienced on the Inverness Royal Academy and Wick Campus projects and seeking assurance that the buildings would not be occupied until all the works had been completed to the satisfaction of the Health and Safety Executive and the Council, the Committee otherwise **NOTED** the updated information on health, safety and wellbeing issues and developments contained in the report.

8. Occupational Health Report

There was circulated Report No. CSC/3/17 by the Head of People & Transformation which provided an overview of the work undertaken by RS Occupational Health for the period October to November, 2016.

It was reported that RS Occupational Health were bought by another company on 1 October 2016 and there had been service delivery issues as a result. An Action Plan had been agreed and the company had been given three months to provide at least the same level of service previously received. A review meeting with the company was held on 11 January, 2017 to discuss the continued poor performance and the option of terminating the contract was explained to the company should performance not improve. It was explained to the company that this was having a detrimental impact on staff, who were not receiving the support they required. Extra staff resources were also required from the Council to make up for shortcomings in the delivery of the contract. The company accepted that performance was below the required standard and agreed to submit a rectification plan within 10 working days. The Council would then have 10 working days to approve/not approve the plan. The company had recently appointed a local Senior Nurse in Inverness which was a key appointment, so some progress was being made.

Continuing, if the contract was terminated, the Council was looking at a contingency plan i.e. the appointment of other providers for occupational health services. This work was currently underway to ensure that there was continuity in service if the contract was terminated.

It was advised that the Committee would be updated prior to the next meeting on the performance issues with the new Occupational Health provider.

Further, a total of 81 management referrals were seen by RSOH in this period. The main issues that staff were presenting with were anxiety, depression, stress, etc; or musculoskeletal problems. These were also the main issues for referral in the previous periods.

A pilot self-referral project was conducted between September and November 2016 which allowed staff to refer themselves to Occupational Health. Given the outcomes detailed in the report it was recommended that the cost of the self-referral project could not be justified and that it be discontinued. Instead more resources should go into encouraging Managers to refer staff timely and appropriately for OH services. It was confirmed that staff could also still be referred through Human Resources for OH Services.

The Committee:-

- i **NOTED** that the Committee would be updated prior to the next meeting on the performance issues with the new Occupational Health provider;
- ii **AGREED** that the self-referral project is discontinued;
- ii **NOTED** the information contained in the report.

The meeting concluded at 12.25 p.m.