

**The Highland Council
Central Safety Committee**

Minutes of Meeting of the Central Safety Committee held in Council Headquarters, Glenurquhart Road, Inverness on Friday 2 November 2017 at Noon.

Present:

Employer's Representatives:

Mr A MacKinnon
Mr G MacKenzie

Mr R Gale

Staff Side Representatives:

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

Mr D Morrison, UCATT
BDA/CSP/RCN

In attendance:

Ms G Falconer, Occupational Health, Safety and Wellbeing Manager, Corporate Resources Service
Mr F MacDonald, Head of Property Services, Development and Infrastructure Service
Mrs C Campbell, Head of Performance and Resources, Community Services
Ms F Grant, Attendance Officer, Corporate Resources Service
Mr Ian Jackson, Education Officer, Care and Learning Service
Mr D MacLeod, Digital Services Manager, Chief Executive's Office
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 G Mackenzie, Caithness, Sutherland & Easter Ross Health & Safety Working Group
Ms H Ross, Senior Ward Manager, Chief Executive's Office
Mrs L Dunn, Principal Administrator, Chief Executive's Office

Also in attendance:

Mr I Tasker, Project Worker, Scottish Hazards (Items 1-6 only)

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Mr A Baxter, Mr Hayes, Mr R Laird and Mr M Murphy.

2. Declarations of Interest

Mr A MacKinnon declared a non-financial interest as his wife and daughter were employees of The Highland Council but, having applied the test outlined in Paragraphs 5.2 and 5.3 of the Councillors' Code of Conduct, concluded that the interest did not preclude him from taking part in the discussion at the meeting.

3. Minutes of Last Meeting

There had been circulated Minutes of the last meeting of the Committee held on 8 September, 2017, the terms of which were **APPROVED**.

4. Matters Arising from the Minutes

Arising from the Minutes, it was reported that a report on Kilvean Crematorium would be submitted to the next meeting (Item 11.iii).

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 18 October 2017;
- (ii) Caithness, Sutherland and Easter Ross Health and Safety Working Group held on 31 August 2017; and
- (iii) Ross, Skye and Lochaber Health and Safety Group held on 7 September 2017.

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

6. Presentation on the Worker Engagement in the Waste Industry Project

Mr Ian Tasker from Scottish Hazards gave a presentation on the Worker Engagement in the Waste Industry Project. He also tabled a copy of a proposed questionnaire to be undertaken with staff and he sought feedback on this.

During discussion, the Committee raised the following main points:-

- The Committee welcomed the opportunity to measure improvement and it was suggested that once the questionnaire had been completed the information should be collated and analysed locally. It was highlighted that the questionnaire categories were very similar to the accident causes as detailed in the Community Services Annual Health, Safety and Well Being Report;
- In terms of timescale, it was suggested that findings could be published on Workers Memorial Day (28 April 2018). However, it was recognised that this might be an ambitious deadline and it was therefore suggested that, following consultation with the Scottish Centre for Health Working Lives, a joint event could be held with Highland Council which would include third sector representation and help lift the profile of Workers Memorial Day. Further information would be provided on how many third sector organisations worked in recycling on behalf of the Council;
- It was explained that an employee survey was being issued as part of the Workforce Planning Action Plan and consequently there could be an opportunity to incorporate the questionnaire into this process;
- It was recommended that, during the interim period, the Trade Union representatives should inform staff that the questionnaire was going to be issued for completion and explain that this would be an opportunity for them to raise concerns/risks to improve their working environment; and

- It was also recommended that a measure of support should be provided in respect of completion of the questionnaire. Addressing any literacy, numeracy and computer skill issues identified would reduce health and safety risks as well as upskill workers, creating a more sustainable workforce.

Following discussion, the Chairman thanked Mr Tasker for his attendance and the Committee **NOTED** the presentation.

7. Annual Health, Safety and Well Being Reports

a) Community Services

There had been circulated Report No. CSC/11/17 by the Director of Community Services.

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

b) Corporate Development

There had been circulated Report No. CSC/12/17 by the Head of People and Transformation.

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

c) Development & Infrastructure

There had been circulated Report No. CSC/13/17 by the Director of Development and Infrastructure.

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

8. Property related health and safety issues

There had been circulated Report No. CSC/14/17 by the Director of Development and Infrastructure.

During discussion, the following main points were raised:-

- The log contained a number of issues relating to flues and it was explained that the HSE had recently taken an organisation to court for which a fine of £458,000 was issued. Therefore, in view of the significant potential financial implications, information had been circulated to staff on the Sentencing Guidelines for cognisance and should also be added to the Corporate Risk Register but further information would be presented on this to the next meeting;
- Concern was expressed at the lack of planned inspections of Community Services Depots and it was queried whether this Policy also included these premises. It was explained that each Service Director was responsible for ensuring that there were sufficient resources available for maintenance and the responsibility for depots lay with the Director of Community Services. However, this was a corporate policy and dialogue had commenced with the relevant officials whereby it was agreed that there would be a requirement to

ensure that there were service contracts in place by 1 April 2018 for carrying out depot inspections and the Committee welcomed this;

- It was explained that maintenance requests were submitted to the Development and Infrastructure Service but sometimes, depending on the type of request, it was the responsibility for Community Services to undertake the work and there appeared to be a lack of liaison with these requests. Consequently there were a number of health and safety issues that were not being addressed. It was therefore suggested that the relevant officials responsible for undertaking maintenance on Council work place properties from both Development and Infrastructure and Community Services undertake a LEAN review on raising requests to address property issues in order to improve the process. It was explained that the Director of Care and Learning's Efficiency Group had identified the need for Project Management Impact and Maintenance Policy procedures to be reviewed. In addition, the diversity of property responsibilities were stressed but the need for a more corporate structured approach was recognised. However, although a more streamlined approach for Responsible Premises Officers to raise maintenance requests was welcome it was highlighted that there was a need to ensure that there was adequate budget to meet these demands whilst ensuring that the duty of care to employees was being met;
- Further to the point raised previously, it was clarified that there were no schedules in place for inspection of depots and that these were undertaken by the Responsible Premises Officers (RPO) and issues raised via K2. It was further highlighted that there was a requirement for the RPO to conduct a Risk Assessment for each premises and to mitigate against these and the details of this should be uploaded to K2 also. However, it was highlighted that Building Maintenance had schedules in place to undertake joint inspections. In response assurance was provided that Property Responsibilities were being reviewed with a view to establishing an improved corporate approach, as indicated previously, and this included issues such as inspections. The Committee was also informed that all premises inspections were published on the intranet under the Health and Safety section.

Following discussion, the Committee **NOTED** the contents of the report.

9. Update on Occupational Health, Safety and Wellbeing Issues

There had been circulated Report No. CSC/15/17 by the Head of People and Transformation.

During discussion, the following main points were raised:-

- It was suggested that work schedulers should have more awareness of tenants/properties where there had been a history of violence or aggression. The importance of ensuring that any incidents were reported, each time, to ensure that appropriate action could be taken was stressed. In addition, a further check would be made to ensure that schedulers checked the database (which was available on the intranet) and, where appropriate, added an alert to the PDA prior to work orders being issued;
- It was highlighted that the no-smoking policy for staff undertaking work at Council house premises was not being adhered to and staff were continuing to be put at risk. It was explained that the Council had a clear policy on this

and that there was a facility on the PDA device which enabled the visit to be aborted due to health and safety reasons and it was recommended that this policy be followed at all times. It was explained that the tenant would be contacted thereafter whereby it would be explained to them that the work would not be completed if they did not meet the necessary safety conditions. It was suggested that a briefing be circulated to staff on this policy and the process to be followed by staff;

- With regard to working in unsanitary conditions, again it was explained that staff should not be working in these situations, the serious health risks of doing so were emphasised, and should instead be referring these incidents to the specialist Biohazards Team; and
- It was stressed that there was a separate formal process that should be followed to report violent incidents, i.e. they should not be recorded on the back of a worksheet. It was explained that staff were not dealing with these situations frequently and therefore were unfamiliar with the policy so it was suggested that a reminder be issued on the process to be followed.

Following discussion, the Committee:-

- i. **NOTED** the updated information on health, safety and wellbeing issues and developments contained in the report;
- ii. **APPROVED** the changes to the health and safety management system; and
- iii. **AGREED** that briefings be issued on the formal processes to be followed in regard to aborting maintenance visits for health and safety reasons and reporting violent incidents.

10. Occupational Health Service Update

There had been circulated Report No. CSC/16/17 by the Head of People and Transformation.

The Committee **NOTED** the Occupational Health activity for the last three months.

11. Dates for Meetings in 2018

The Committee **AGREED** the following dates of meetings in 2018:-

- Friday 2 February 2018, 12 noon
- Friday 4 May 2018, 12 noon
- Friday 3 August 2018, 12 noon
- Friday 2 November 2018, 10.30 am

All the meetings to be held in Council Headquarters, Inverness.

The meeting ended at 1.10 p.m.