

**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 2018 at 10.30 a.m.

Present:

Employer's Representatives:

Mr A MacKinnon
Mr M Reiss
Mr R Gale

Staff Side Representatives:

Mr D Griffiths, GMB
Mr A Wemyss, UNITE
Mr R Cram, UNITE/UCATT (substitute)

In attendance:

Mr S Walsh, Head of People and ICT, Corporate Resources Service
Ms G Falconer, Occupational Health, Safety and Wellbeing Manager, Corporate Resources Service
Mrs C Campbell, Head of Performance and Resources, Community Services
Mr I Jackson, Education Officer, Care and Learning Service
Mr S Duncan, Property Manager, Development & Infrastructure Service
Ms D Sutherland, Corporate Audit Manager, Corporate Resources Service
Ms F Grant, Attendance Officer, Corporate Resources Service
Mr G MacKenzie, Caithness, Sutherland & Easter Ross Health & Safety Working Group
Mr W Munro, Inverness, Nairn and Badenoch & Strathspey Operational Area Health and Safety Working Group
Mr A MacInnes, Administrative Assistant, Chief Executive's Service

1. Appointment of Chair and Vice Chair

Members were advised that, in terms of the remit of the Committee, following an election of councillors, and annually thereafter, the Committee shall appoint from amongst their members a Chair and Vice Chair. If the Chair appointed be one of the Employer's representatives, the Vice-Chair shall be one of the Staff Side representatives and vice versa.

Mr R Gale, seconded by Mr D Griffiths, moved that Mr A MacKinnon be appointed as Chair. There being no other nominations, Mr MacKinnon was duly appointed, and took the Chair.

Mr A Wemyss, seconded by Mr A MacKinnon, moved that Mr D Griffiths be appointed as Vice Chair. There being no other nominations, Mr Griffiths was duly appointed.

2. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Mr G MacKenzie of the Employer's Side and Mr M Hayes and Mr I Macleman of the Staff Side.

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 3 August, 2018, the terms of which were **APPROVED**.

5. **Matters Arising from the Minutes**

Arising from the Minutes the following matters were raised:-

Kilvean Crematorium Health & Safety Improvement Plan – It was noted from the last meeting that there was to be an action to prepare safe systems of work for excavations and that employees now had to undertake an industry standard training course for cemetery operations. An assurance was also sought that this action would be for all employees carrying out burial excavation work and not just those based in Inverness.

The Committee **AGREED** that an update on action and timescales to prepare safe systems of work for burial excavations and industry standard training for cemetery operations would be circulated to the Committee.

Public Private Partnership (PPP) School Wall Ties – It was confirmed that all the work to carry out repairs on the Council's PPP School Wall Ties had been completed over the October School holiday period for high risk schools.

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 17 October, 2018;
- (ii) Caithness, Sutherland and Easter Ross Health and Safety Working Group held on 4 October, 2018; and
- (iii) Ross, Skye and Lochaber Health and Safety Group held on 13 September, 2018.

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

Arising from the Minutes the following points were raised:

i Inverness, Nairn, Badenoch & Strathspey Minute

- a) First Aid – in some areas there was a lack of up to date lists of First Aiders. The Occupational Health, Safety and Wellbeing Manager undertook to ensure that Business Support and Learning and Development were working together to get updated First Aider lists out to all Council areas.

ii Caithness, Sutherland and Easter Ross Minute

Incident Alarms – It was advised that rather than purchasing different alarm systems, a feature of the new telephone system was that the Council's ICT team could programme the system to act as a paging system. The Occupational Health, Safety and Wellbeing Manager was working with ICT colleagues to roll out the paging system to work places.

IT/Phone problems - these were causing stress and difficulties to some staff in Drummuie. It was advised that an ICT clinic had been arranged at Drummuie and Wipro staff had visited the premises. There were ongoing ICT network issues at the premises and a solution was currently being investigated.

It was acknowledged that ICT issues were causing staff a great deal of frustration and there was a need for the new device rollout to fully resolve the problems. In this respect, the aim was to speed up the device rollout to staff. The plan to do this had still to be finalised, but an assurance was given that this was a top priority.

The Chairman expressed his sincere thanks to the Council's ICT team for their dedication and commitment in trying to resolve ICT issues.

Thereafter, the Committee **AGREED** that an update on ICT issues and progress in addressing these would be circulated to the Committee.

7. Diriebught Depot

The Head of Performance and Resources, Community Services provided a verbal report covering an update on the electrical infrastructure and progress with identifying suitable welfare provision for Building Maintenance operatives at Diriebught Depot Inverness.

Insofar as electrical infrastructure was concerned, it was reported that the electrical cable at the site was the correct size and there was additional capacity. Therefore there should be no electrical capacity issues at the site and there was a significant cost saving as a result. However, there were some legacy issues at the site and an electrical infrastructure check was needed and quotes for this were being requested from contractors. These costs and a plan for taking this work forward should be known late November.

In terms of welfare facilities at the site options in respect of portacabins had been provided, and a draft specification had been produced and six suppliers had been identified. The specification would be issued to the suppliers by the end of October, 2018. A considerable amount of work had been undertaken by Officials in liaison with trade union representatives to try and put welfare facilities in place at Diriebught that was acceptable to trade unions. The target date for implementation of the new facilities was end March, 2019.

It was advised that as part of the staff engagement exercise, the Chairman and the new Chief Executive would be visiting Diriebught Depot next week to meet staff.

There was a need to ensure that in future any other depot rationalisation projects had welfare facilities included.

As part of the depot rationalisation programme, concern had been expressed regarding the Albert Street depot, Wick. A condition survey on the site had been undertaken and as a result some immediate maintenance repairs had been undertaken. Community Services was actively looking at alternative sites for this depot.

There was a need for proactive maintenance on the Council's property estate which would save money in the longer term. Therefore there was a need to increase the maintenance budget for spend to save purposes and to ensure staff had a safe environment to work in.

The Committee **NOTED** the update on Diriebught Depot.

8. Long Term Absences in Community Services

There was circulated Report No. CSC/19/18 by the Head of Performance & Resources, Community Services, which outlined the reasons for long term absences in Community Services.

In discussion, it was advised that many stress debility absences are not work related but do impact on an employee's ability to attend work. An analysis of the reasons behind non work related stress and work related stress absences was currently being undertaken.

Continuing, Managers were now more aware of the signs to look out for in terms of employees mental health and were more proactive in introducing Occupational Health Services at an early stage.

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

9. Care and Learning Service – Annual Health and Safety Report

There was circulated Report No. CSC/20/18 by the Director of Care and Learning which reported on the Service's performance during 2017/18 in respect of the health, safety and wellbeing of staff within the Care and Learning Service, and outlined the priorities for the forthcoming year.

In particular, it was alarming to see the number of violent incidents by pupils on school staff in Highland and this was also a national problem. The Service had a Promoting Positive Relationships team who worked with young people. In many cases the behaviour of young children improved the more years they spent in school. However there was a small group of young people who seemed impervious to the interventions made by school staff and the Promoting Positive Relationships team.

The Service encouraged all staff to report incidents of violent behaviour by pupils on staff so that the extent of the problem was known. It was also important to report violence against staff by parents or relatives of parents. The earlier the intervention, the more that could be done to help staff.

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

10. Corporate Resources Annual Health, Safety and Well Being Report

There was circulated Report No. CSC/21/18 by the Depute Chief Executive and Director of Corporate Services which advised of the Service's performance during 2017/18 in respect of the health, safety and wellbeing of staff within Corporate Resources Service and outlined the priorities for the forthcoming year.

In particular, thanks went to Rhona Douglas, Health and Safety Adviser for her assistance with the report.

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

11. Property related health and safety issues

There was circulated Report No. CSC/22/18 by the Director of Development & Infrastructure which provided an update on significant property related health and safety issues, any emerging future risks and new policy and procedures introduced.

In discussion, there was a significant challenge in ensuring that Council premises were compliant in terms of meeting statutory legislative requirements e.g. electrical, gas and water safety and there was a need to ensure that adequate resources were found for this work to be carried out. An undertaking was given to provide Councillor M Reiss with an estimate of the cost to address the non compliance of the fire/electrical/gas/water matters highlighted in the report and the evidence that was used to support capital bids on property maintenance.

Property construction projects could be delayed for many reasons and safety was a top priority. The Committee directed that there should be no pressure on the property team to allow early access to premises until appropriate compliance checks are carried out to ensure the property is safe to occupy.

The Committee **NOTED** the contents of the report and that an update would be circulated to the Committee in terms of the budget considerations for property related health and safety issues.

12. Annual Occupational Health and Safety Report 2017/18

There was circulated Report No. CSC/23/18 by the Head of People and ICT which presented the Council's Occupational Health, Safety and Wellbeing performance, achievements and progress in 2017/18.

In particular, it was advised that the Chairman had the privilege to hand out Health and Safety Diploma Presentations on Wednesday, 31 October, 2018 to four Members of Council staff. It was encouraging to see the time and commitment by those staff into achieving the award. The Occupational Health, Safety and Wellbeing Team's work was also commended.

In terms of the significant increase in did not attend appointments (DNAs), it was important to stress to Services for their staff to attend Occupational Health appointments.

The Committee:-

- i **NOTED** the achievements and performance for 2017/18; and
- ii **APPROVED** the Occupational Health and Safety Annual Report.

13. **Update on Occupational Health, Safety and Wellbeing Issues**

There had been circulated Report No. CSC/24/18 by the Head of People and ICT which provided an update on health and safety issues and developments for the Highland Council. It reviewed activities arising from Health and Safety Executive interventions; changes made to the health and safety management system and other activities undertaken since the last Committee meeting.

In particular, it was noted that the Council's Employee Wellbeing Strategy for the next 3 years would be submitted to the next meeting of the Committee.

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

14. **Occupational Health Service Update**

There had been circulated Report No. CSC/25/18 by the Head of People and ICT which provided an overview of the work undertaken by Iqarus, the Council's Occupational Health (OH) provider for the period July to September, 2018.

Following consideration, the Committee **NOTED** the Occupational Health activity for the last three months.

15. **Dates for Meetings in 2019**

The Committee **APPROVED** the undernoted dates for its meetings in 2019:-

Friday, 1 February
Friday, 3 May
Friday, 9 August
Wednesday, 30 October

All the meetings would be held at Council Headquarters, Inverness commencing at 12 noon.

The meeting ended at 11.50 a.m.