

**The Highland Council  
Central Safety Committee**

Minutes of Meeting of the **Central Safety Committee** held in Council Headquarters, Inverness on **Friday 7 October, 2022 at 10.30 a.m.**

**Present:**

**Employer's Representatives:**

Mr R Gale (remotely)  
Mr B Lobban  
Mr D Louden  
Mr P Oldham (remotely)

**Staff Side Representative s:**

Mr A Bell, LNCT  
Mr D Griffiths, GMB (remotely)  
Mr M Hayes, UNISON (remotely)  
Mr I Macleman, UNITE/UCATT (remotely)  
Ms S Purdie, RCN

**In attendance:**

Ms E Barrie, Head of People, Resources & Finance Service  
Ms G Falconer, Occupational Health, Safety and Wellbeing Manager, Resources & Finance Service  
Mr F MacDonald, Property & Housing, Health & Safety Wellbeing Co-ordinator  
Mr T Murdison, Property Manager, Housing & Property  
Ms T Urry, Infrastructure & Environment, Health & Safety Wellbeing Co-ordinator  
Mrs F Malcolm, Health & Social Care Health & Safety Wellbeing Co-ordinator  
Mr I Jackson, (substitute) Education and Learning, Health & Safety Wellbeing Co-ordinator  
Ms D Sutherland, Resources & Finance/Performance & Governance/Transformation, Health & Safety Wellbeing Co-ordinator  
Mr A Yates, Communities & Place Service, Health & Safety Wellbeing Co-ordinator  
Mr W Munro, Inverness, Nairn and Badenoch & Strathspey Operational Area Health and Safety Working Group  
Ms K Haylett, Occupational, Health, Safety & Wellbeing Adviser  
Mr A MacInnes, Administrative Assistant, Performance & Governance Service

**SUBJECT/DECISION**

**ACTION**

**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 B Lobban, seconded by Mr R Gale, moved that Mr D Louden be appointed as Chair. There being no other nominations, Mr D Louden was duly appointed and took the Chair.

Mr I McLeman, seconded by Mr A Bell, moved that Mr M Hayes be appointed as Vice Chair. There being no other nominations, Mr Hayes was duly appointed.

## 2. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Mr C Munro of the Employer's Side, Mr M Rodgers, ECO Housing & Property, Mr B Porter, Education & Learning, Health & Safety Wellbeing Co-ordinator, Mr R Cattle & Mr W Mackinnon, Ross, Skye and Lochaber, Operational Area Health and Safety Working Group.

## 3. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

## 4. Terms of Reference

There was circulated Report No. CSC/5/22 by the Head of People.

The Committee **APPROVED** the changes to the terms of reference for the Central Safety Committee.

## 5. Minutes of Last Meeting

There had been circulated Minutes of the last meeting of the Committee held on 4 February, 2022, the terms of which were **APPROVED**.

## 6. Matters Arising from the Minutes

i Serous Assaults at Inverness High School – It was confirmed that additional security advice had been issued to Schools.

ii CCTV operator training – this issue had been escalated to the Executive Leadership Team who decided it was a property function and it was on the Corporate Risk Register.

**P&H Co-ordinator**

iii Delays in NHS treatment – the OHSWM undertook to ask Services to identify how many employees were in a no pay category due to delays in NHS treatment. This information was not available from payroll and HR would look at other ways to find out this information.

**Head of People**

iv Accidents at Carrs Corner Depot – this was mainly as a consequence of vehicle movements at the Depot and the Responsible Premises Officer (RPO) was looking into traffic management at the Depot.

v Review of Council Depots – a review of Council Depots was being undertaken and this would consider rationalisation and the creation of 'Super Depots' at strategic locations. This might address some of issues at the Carrs Corner Depot. A point was made that any changes to the sites, such as additional storage or activities should be properly planned and risk assessed and there should be consultation with the workforce.

**P&H Co-ordinator**

vi Safe use of woodwork machinery – progress was being made with Highland having its own training centre for woodwork machinery. Staff had been identified to take up this role and the agreement required to be formalised with the Scottish Schools Education Research Council.

**Educ Co-ordinator**

## 7. **Minutes of Area Health and Safety Groups and Service Trade Union Health and Safety Liaison Groups**

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

### **Area Health and Safety Groups**

- (i) ;Ross, Skye and Lochaber – 21 April & 22 September, 2022;
- (ii) Inverness, Nairn, Badenoch & Strathspey – 26 May & 22 September, 2022 ;
- (iii) Caithness, Sutherland & Easter Ross – 9 June, 2022;

### **Service Trade Union Health and Safety Liaison Groups**

- (iv) Health and Social Care Service – 22 April, 2022;
- (v) Communities and Places Service – 23 June, 2022;
- (vi) Housing and Property Service – 1 June, 2022;
- (vii) Education – 3 February & 28 April, 2022;
- (viii) Infrastructure, Environment & Economy – 10 February & 1 July, 2022;
- (ix) Resources & Finance/Performance & Governance – 3 August, 2022.

The Committee **NOTED** the Area Health and Safety Groups and Service Trade Union Health and Safety Liaison Groups Minutes.

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

#### i Ross, Skye and Lochaber minutes -

The issue of lack of Service representatives attending Service trade union liaison meetings was again raised and Service Health & Safety Wellbeing Co-ordinators were requested to identify Service representatives to attend these meetings. There would not be proper engagement or progress with health and safety matters without employees who work in these areas attending these meetings.

**All Service  
H&S Co-ordinators**

#### ii Inverness, Nairn, Badenoch & Strathspey –

Fire at Crematorium - fire had damaged components of one of the cremators and it was now out of action. The fire had been contained very quickly. Repairs to the cremator were in progress and there would be testing. Planning for replacement cremators had begun.

Nairn Courthouse – concerns were expressed regarding the lack of fire alarm testing at this premises and an action plan to address this was requested. It was understood that someone had been identified to undertake fire alarm testing at the Courthouse and this would be checked and confirmed to the Committee.

**P&H Co-ordinator**

### First Aiders and Fire Marshalls

The issue of First Aiders and Fire Marshalls and the new way of working was raised as these Officers were not always in the building. It was queried how this was being monitored across the Council. It was advised that RPOs were being asked to work with Managers to identify staff who can be First Aiders and Fire Marshalls to ensure there was consistent cover.

Continuing, instead of nominating individuals for the RPO role a way forward might be to pilot a Building Management Group to cover the RPO function in HQ and this was agreed by the Committee.

**P&H Co-ordinator**

There was also a focus on safeguards for lone working across all Services.

### iii Caithness, Sutherland & Easter Ross

RPOs – an update would be provided to the next meeting on progress in addressing challenges in training and supporting RPOs.

**P&H Co-ordinator/  
OHSWM**

Violence and Aggression in Schools - with the launch of the new Electronic Management System this would allow incidents/accidents to be reported immediately to the Occupational, Health, Safety & Wellbeing Team.

### iv Health and Social Care

Inspection of Premises at Dochfour Drive – a request had been made for a health teams premises at Dochfour Drive to be inspected due to a rat infestation and Badgers on site. It was advised that this matter was being addressed. The fabric of these premises was deteriorating and it was noted that the team in these premises would be moved to new premises as soon as possible. The Property team would carry out an inspection of the premises next week

**Property Manager**

### v Housing and Property

An update would be provided to the next meeting on the outcome of investigations into RIDDOR (Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations) incidents.

**P&H Co-ordinator**

An undertaking was given to undertake a survey of dead trees at Duthac House, Tain.

**Property Manager**

Fire Alarms in Schools – the majority of cases of fire alarms going off in schools was misuse by pupils and this had caused a serious impact on the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS). The SFRS would not now respond to all automated dialled calls and Fire Marshalls would require to investigate first and then call the SFRS to confirm whether or not there was a fire. This had significant implications for the health and safety of out of hours staff attending to investigate alarms going off. Residential and domestic premises would still be responded to by the SFRS.

## vi Education

Additional Support Needs (ASN) - the number of pupils requiring ASN was increasing. It was queried if a formulae was used to decide how many staff should be allocated to ASN provision within a school.

The up to date position on ASN provision in schools would be checked and information forwarded to the Committee.

**Educ Co-ordinator**

## vii Infrastructure, Environment & Economy

Issues highlighted from the minutes were training for staff on hand arm vibration syndrome (HAVS); condition surveys of Depots; poor radio coverage and actions taken to improve this.

The Roads teams were commended for all the work carried out in relation to HAVS and an update on progress on this issue from some other Services was provided. In particular, staff should be discouraged from using their own personal tools at work as vibration or noise levels of their own tools could not be assessed and it was stressed that the positive purchasing and hiring policy is adhered to.

**All H&S Co-ordinators**

An issue was highlighted that Building Maintenance had been advised that tools would be supplied to them, but this had not happened and therefore staff were having to share tools or use their own tools in order to get the job done.

There was no structure to the allocation of tools to the workforce and consideration would be given on how to address this.

**P&H Co-ordinator**

## viii Resources & Finance/Performance & Governance

Staff Survey – engagement sessions with staff would take place and these would focus on the corporate staff survey. Thereafter, Services would be provided with more detailed information on the survey relating to their Service.

**Head of People**

## **8. Update on Occupational Health, Safety and Wellbeing Issues**

There was circulated Report No. CSC/6/22 by the Head of People which provided an update on health and safety issues and developments for the Highland Council.

It was highlighted that the Health and Safety Executive would be commencing a new intervention programme focussing on the management of asbestos in schools from October, 2022 onwards.

A new electronic health and safety management system which would record and manage all accidents, incidents, near misses and acts of violence and aggression against staff would go live on 17 October, 2022. A presentation on the new system would be provided at the next meeting.

**OHSWM**

The importance of carrying out risk assessments and raising awareness of these being carried out for school activities was highlighted. The OHSWM would like to work with the Education Service on new Teacher inductions to offer them the same health and safety opportunities offered to other staff.

Concern was expressed regarding the loss of the Health and Safety Trainer/Moving and Handling Co-ordinator, the postholder who was now on a 2 year secondment. Difficulties in recruiting to this post had led to developing a “train the trainer” approach and also asking advisers to take on providing more training workshops.

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

## **9. Update on Occupational Health, Safety and Employee Assistance Programme Services**

There had been circulated Report No. CSC/7/22 by the Head of People which provided an update on the work of the occupational health service and the Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) for the period April – August, 2022.

Ongoing issues with the occupational health provider were highlighted and discussed and any issues with the OH service provided should be reported to the OHSWM. There had been a decrease in ‘did not attend appointments’ and this was welcomed.

The Committee **NOTED** the activity for both Occupational Health and the EAP for April to August, 2022.

## **10. Annual OHSW Report and Plan 2021/2022**

There was circulated Report No. CSC/8/22 by the Head of People.

It was noted that there was also a requirement for Services to provide health and safety plans and these would be submitted to this Committee.

It was welcomed that there had been a reduction in physical injuries and this was good in terms of the productivity for the Council. It was queried if time off for work related mental health issues had increased. Information from HR would be required to check this.

**Head of  
People/OHS  
WM**

Statistics showed that there was a steady decline in accidents and incidents over a number of years which was good news and all the work by staff on this was commended.

The Committee:-

- i. **NOTED** the updated health, safety and wellbeing issues and developments contained in the report; and
- ii. **APPROVED** the passage of the report to the next Corporate Resources Committee.

## 11. Occupational Health and Safety Strategy 2022-2025

OHSWM

There was circulated Report No. CSC/9/22 by the Head of People.

Following consideration, the Committee **APPROVED** the occupational health and safety strategy and plan.

## 12. Property Related Health and Safety Issues

There had been circulated Report No. CSC/10/22 by the Executive Chief Officer Property and Housing.

In particular, improvements had been made in relation to record keeping and staff training in relation to the control of asbestos.

An in-house team was to be established to manage portable appliance testing (PAT) across the Council estate. The timeline for commencing PAT was dependant on how quickly staff could be appointed.

An Officer had been appointed to carry out a review of the RPO function, which included comparing RPO models used by other Councils. A report of this would be submitted to a future meeting.

A Redesign workshop had taken place recently and asset rationalisation was discussed. This was a significant and challenging project and there would be engagement with staff throughout the process. An update on progress would be submitted to the Committee's next meeting.

It was advised that the Depot condition surveys had been completed. A summary of the surveys was being prepared for Services and Trade Union representatives for circulation within the next 2 months.

The Committee **NOTED:-**

- i. the current levels of compliance and progress being made;
- ii. an update report on the review of the RPO function would be submitted to a future meeting; and
- iii. an update on the asset rationalisation project and health and safety implications arising from this would be submitted to the next meeting.

**P&H Co-ordinator**

## 13. Date of Next Meeting

The Committee **APPROVED** that the next meeting would be held on Friday, 2 December, 2022 at 10.30 a.m.

The meeting ended at 12.30 p.m.