

**The Highland Council
Central Safety Committee**

Minutes of Meeting of the **Central Safety Committee** held remotely on **Friday 2 December 2022 at 10.30 a.m.**

Present:

Employer's Representatives:

Mr R Gale
Mr D Louden
Mr P Oldham

Staff Side Representatives:

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

In attendance:

Mr M Rodgers, ECO Housing & Property
Ms E Barrie, Head of People, Resources & Finance Service
Ms G Falconer, Occupational Health, Safety and Wellbeing Manager, Resources & Finance Service
Mr D Goldie, Head of Housing & Building Maintenance, Housing & Property
Mr I Kyle, substitute, Health & Social Care Health & Safety Wellbeing Co-ordinator
Mr B Porter, Education & Learning, Health & Safety Wellbeing Co-ordinator
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
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
Mr R Cattle & Mr W Mackinnon, Ross, Skye and Lochaber, Operational Area Health and Safety Working Group.
Mr A MacInnes, Administrative Assistant, Performance & Governance Service

SUBJECT/DECISION

ACTION

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Mr B Lobban, Mr C Munro of the Employer's Side and Mrs F Malcolm, Health & Social Care Health & Safety Wellbeing Co-ordinator.

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 7 October, 2022, the terms of which were **APPROVED**.

4. Matters Arising from the Minutes

i CCTV Operator training – work was being carried out to identify the staff who will require CCTV Operator training and more detail on this would be provided at the next meeting of the Committee.

**P&H Co-
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ii Delays in NHS treatment – the issue of employees who were in a no pay category due to delays in NHS treatment had been added to the Corporate Risk Register. Work would continue on individual cases and to ensure the rights of employees were in line with statutory requirements.

iii Accidents at Carrs Corner Depot – the Responsible Premises Officer (RPO) was looking at traffic management at the Depot.

iv Review of Council Depots – there was a transformation project on the existing depot estate. A project manager had been appointed and the first Board meeting was held recently with Service representatives who used the depots. The Board would meet on a regular basis to progress the new super depot business case along with rural depot options. Also, the Board would consider the update works required from depot surveys and there would be consultation with RPOs and Services on this.

v Safe Use of Woodwork Machinery - the Service was working towards the Council becoming an accredited Centre for providing training on the Safe Use of Woodwork Machinery. Accreditation would be with the Scottish Schools Education Research Centre and the process of identifying staff and/or a contractor who might take on this role had commenced.

It was highlighted that there was a statutory requirement to provide health and safety training during normal working hours.

vi Nairn Courthouse - there would be relocation of some staff into Nairn courthouse. In the interim period a contractor would be hired to carry out fire alarm testing until an RPO was in place.

vii Representation at Service trade union liaison meetings – Service Health & Safety Wellbeing Co-ordinators had been requested to identify Service representatives to attend these meetings and nominations had been received from some Services. However, there

was still not representatives from all Services at these meetings and the OHSWM undertook to contact these Services for nominations.

OHSWM

viii – Additional Support Needs (ASN) provision – it was highlighted that the level of funding being allocated overall to schools this year was the same as the previous year. The allocation was on a needs based model. Schools would determine how they utilise this funding.

The Staff Side were of the view that ASN resources had not remained the same. While various attempts had been made at addressing the allocation model, this model had never been fully funded. The allocation model was currently being looked at again.

A separate meeting for Councillor R Gale and Mr M Hayes, Unison would be arranged with the Head of Secondary to discuss the ASN formulae used in schools.

**Educ
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ix First Aiders and Fire Marshalls – in the Corporate Health and Safety Policy, Executive Chief Officer's and Heads of Service were required to appoint a Senior Officer within each premises to act as a Responsible Premises Officer (RPO). There were RPO vacancies that required to be filled whose duties also included co-ordinating first aid and fire safety cover in premises. A pilot Building User Group at HQ was to be set up with the 1st meeting to be arranged for January, 2023. Trade Union Health & Safety Representatives would be invited to join this Group.

**Health &
Safety
Co-
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Health & Safety Co-ordinators were asked to ensure that RPO vacancies were filled as a matter of urgency.

A report on the RPO function was to be submitted to the Executive Leadership Team in order to agree a way forward for this important function and a report on this would be submitted to a future meeting of this Committee.

**Property
/Housin
g H&S
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x Inspection of premises at Dochfour Drive – it was advised that an inspection was undertaken and there were no confirmed sightings of vermin inside the building, but bait boxes were left on site.

An undertaking was given to check progress with an inspection of the fabric of these premises.

**Property
Manager**

xi Reporting of Injuries, Diseases & Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR) incidents – a wall bar Incident at Bun-sgoil a Ghàidhlig Phort Rìgh was now subject to a Health and Safety Executive investigation and a report would be issued in due course. The staff at the school were commended for their work in responding to this serious incident.

There was a further RIDDOR incident at Milton of Leys Primary School and there was concern that the site had been changed before the investigation was carried out. The site should not be moved if there was a serious accident and it was highlighted that there was training available for staff on accident investigation and health and safety training should be provided by Services to staff.

xii Trees at Duthac House, Tain – It was confirmed that a contractor had been hired to remove dead trees at this site.

xiii Asset Management – a weblink had been sent to the Committee with an update on the work of the Redesign Board relating to the Asset Management project and the Inverness Town House Project.

In terms of consultation with staff on the asset rationalisation process, the governance process for rationalisation properties had to be followed and thereafter once decisions had been made the consultation process with staff groups would take place.

xiv Staff Survey – Staff engagement sessions had been held and staff were provided with feedback on corporate information arising from the staff survey. Services would be provided with more detailed information on the survey relating to their Service.

xv – Accident Reporting System – an example of incident reports submitted on the new accident reporting system was shown.

5. 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 – 17 November, 2022;
- (ii) Inverness, Nairn, Badenoch & Strathspey – 16 November, 2022 ;

Service Trade Union Health and Safety Liaison Groups

- (iii) Health and Social Care Service – 21 November, 2022;
- (iv) Communities and Places Service – 21 October, 2022;
- (v) Housing and Property Service – 10 November, 2022;
- (vi) Education – 8 September & draft minute of 10 November, 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 -

All Service Leads had been asked to nominate a representative to attend this Area Health and Safety Group.

All Chairs of Area/Service Health and Safety Groups had been asked to co-ordinate meeting dates in 2023 to ensure good attendance at meetings.

ii Inverness, Nairn, Badenoch & Strathspey –

Fire Marshalls/Evacuation Training/First Aiders – It was highlighted from the minutes that “if there was a fatal accident enquiry and these drills/training have not been undertaken it would have a devastating outcome for the council”. This was a concern and as discussed under item 4ix of these minutes action was being taken.

In terms of the asset rationalisation process there was still a requirement to ensure that premises were safe whether or not these properties were to be retained. A point was made that some of the issues with properties was a result of no RPO being in place to address maintenance issues. The importance of filling RPO vacancies was therefore highlighted.

iii Communities and Places Service – it was highlighted that the Management team of the Service had a meeting on health and safety which updated Managers on the new accident reporting system, also encouraging attendance at Area Health and Safety meetings and a review of the health and safety action plan.

iv Housing & Property -

An incident was under investigation by the internal Health and Safety Team where a member of staff struck a cable while breaking ground, this resulted in an electric shock which thankfully was not serious. Information on this incident would be provided to the Unison Health & Safety Representative.

**P&H Co-
ordinator**

Thurso High School Block A remained closed due to structural concerns. There were no concerns regarding the remainder of the building. Demountable classroom units were being provided. Options for addressing the structural problems at the school were currently being explored. The Property Team were also reviewing the rest of the Highland Council estate to identify other buildings of a similar age and material profile and/or with similar precast cladding systems installed to allow for further intrusive surveys to be undertaken. An updated

inspection contract was being developed for these sites to be re-inspected periodically on an ongoing basis.

6. Staff Side Item

Defibrillators – Where are we in the process of installing defibrillators in Council premises? There are still depots that do not have access to these vital pieces of life saving equipment where it is acknowledged the staff are of significant ages.

It was highlighted that there was a need to undertake first aid risk assessments in premises and the Education Service worked with the Lucky to be Here charity on training in the use of defibrillators in some schools.

The Committee **AGREED** that the OHSWM would arrange a meeting with Health & Safety Co-ordinators to draw up a priority list of areas for the location of defibrillators. A corporate bid to the Executive Leadership team for funding for the supply of defibrillators and their maintenance would then be sought.

OHSWM

7. Service Annual Health & Safety Reports/Health, Safety and Wellbeing Policies

i Education Service

There was circulated Report No. CSC/11/22 by the Head of Resources which advised of the Service's performance during 2021/22 in respect of the health, safety and wellbeing of staff within the Education Service.

It was requested that accident reporting and investigation be added to the Service's health and safety action plan. Further, the Health & Safety Executive were to inspect 4 Schools and therefore there was a need to ensure Head Teachers and support staff were aware of asbestos management plans for their premises and that they have undertaken training on Asbestos management to ensure that it could be demonstrated the Council was managing its responsibilities.

**H&S Co-ordinator
Education**

It was highlighted that asbestos e-learning training would soon be available and staff in schools that may still have asbestos should be made aware of this course.

**H&S Co-ordinator
Education**

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

ii Health and Social Care Service

There was circulated Report No. CSC/12/22 by the Head of Integration (Adult Social Care) which advised of the Service's performance during 2021/22 in respect of the health, safety and wellbeing of staff within the Health and Social Care Service.

It was highlighted that the Service's intention to undertake stress risk assessments was very welcome. It was advised that a staff wellbeing survey, incorporating the Health and Safety Executive's stress management standards was in development. It was intended that this will be shared with staff in January 2023.

The Committee **NOTED** the content of the report and the accompanying Service policy and action plan.

iii Communities and Place

There was circulated Report No. CSC/13/22 by the Executive Chief Officer Communities and Place which provided members with the Communities and Place Service Health, Safety and Wellbeing Policy.

In particular, it was advised that there were minor changes to the policy such as the inclusion of the new accident and reporting system. There were a number of corporate policies and guidance under review and the policy would be updated with any changes required from

these reviews. It was intended to submit the Services annual health and safety report to the next meeting.

The Committee **NOTED** the Communities and Place Service Health, Safety and Wellbeing Policy.

8. Update on Occupational Health, Safety and Wellbeing Issues

There was circulated Report No. CSC/14/22 by the Head of People which provided an update on health and safety issues and developments for the Highland Council.

The Committee **NOTED**:-

i the updated information on health, safety and wellbeing issues and developments contained in the report; and

ii the updates to the Occupational Health, Safety & Wellbeing Plan.

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

There had been circulated Report No. CSC/15/22 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 September – October, 2022.

It was highlighted that most management referrals were for mental health reasons. For work related stress issues the main reason was change. Therefore, it was important to think about how change was planned and communicated. More details on this would come from the staff wellbeing survey.

Meetings were being held with the occupational health provider as a result of ongoing issues with service delivery. A procurement exercise for the provision of occupational health services for Highland Council and Highlife Highland had commenced with a view to appointing a provider from 1 April 2023.

It was advised that there was still a high number of did not attend appointments.

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

10. Property Related Health and Safety Issues

There had been circulated Report No. CSC/16/22 by the Executive Chief Officer Property and Housing.

In particular an update was provided in relation to the issue that some Housing Building Maintenance trades staff were having to use their own power tools. It was advised that Council policy was that staff were not permitted to use their own power tools and that suitable power tools would be provided. Management wished to work with trade unions to ensure this policy was adhered to and there was a commitment to ensure there was sufficient and suitable power tools available. Any ongoing difficulties being encountered with the provision of power tools should be raised directly with the Service Lead: Investment & Building Maintenance.

An undertaking was given to have further discussion with staff in the Building Maintenance team on the standard tool kit required and review the inventory of tools to ensure there was sufficient volume of tools.

The Committee:-

- i **NOTED** the current levels of compliance and progress being made; and
- ii **AGREED** that there would be further discussion with staff in the Building Maintenance team on the standard tool kit required and to review the inventory of tools to ensure there was sufficient volume of tools.

**Head of
Housing
&
Building
Maintenance**

11. Date for Meetings in 2023

The Committee **APPROVED** the undernoted dates of meetings of the Committee in 2023:-

Friday, 17 March
Friday, 16 June
Friday, 15 September
Friday, 1 December

All the meetings would commence at 10.30 a.m.

The meeting ended at 12.40 p.m.