

The Highland Council

Minutes of Meeting of the **Central Safety Committee** held in Council Headquarters, Glenurquhart Road, Inverness on **Friday 16 June 2023 at 10.30 am.**

Present:

Employer's Representatives:

Mr R Gale
Mr D Louden
Mr P Oldham

Staff Side Representatives:

Mr A Bell, LNCT
Mr M Smith, UNITE/UCATT (substitute)
Mr D Griffiths, GMB
Ms S Purdie (**SP**), RCN

In attendance:

Mr M MacLeod (**MM**), Interim Depute Chief Executive
Ms E Barrie (**EB**), Interim Head of People, Resources & Finance Service
Ms G Falconer (**GF**), Occupational Health, Safety and Wellbeing Manager, Resources & Finance Service
Mrs A MacPherson (**AM**), Education & Learning, Health & Safety Wellbeing Co-ordinator
Mr F MacDonald (**FM**), Property & Housing, Health & Safety Wellbeing Co-ordinator
Mr T Murdison (**TM**), Service Lead, Corporate Property Management, Housing & Property
Mr I Kyle (**IK**), Health & Social Care, Health & Safety Wellbeing Co-ordinator (substitute)
Ms T Urry (**TU**), Infrastructure & Environment, Health & Safety Wellbeing Co-ordinator
Ms D Sutherland (**DS**), Resources & Finance/Performance & Governance/Depute CEX Services, Health & Safety Wellbeing Co-ordinator
Mrs C Campbell (**CC**), Communities & Place, Health & Safety Wellbeing Co-ordinator (sub)
Mrs D Ferguson (**DF**), Ross, Skye & Lochaber Area (substitute)
Mr W Munro (**WM**), Inverness, Nairn, Badenoch & Strathspey Area
Mr A MacInnes, Interim Senior Committee Officer, Performance & Governance Service

Also in Attendance:-

Ms H Mackendrick, Regional Director, PAM Occupational Health
Mr M Sharp, Clinical Operations Manager, PAM Occupational Health

Item No.	<u>SUBJECT/DECISION</u>	Action
1.	Apologies for Absence Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of :- Mr B Lobban, Mr C Munro of the Employer's Side; Mr M Hayes, UNISON, Mr I Macleman, UNITE/UCATT of the Staff Side; Mr M Rodgers, ECO Housing & Property, Mrs F Malcolm, HSC Co-ordinator; Mr A Yates, CP Co-ordinator;; Ms H Ross, CSER Area; and Mr W Mackinnon, RSL Area.	
2.	Declarations of Interest/Transparency Statement	

There were no declarations of interest.

3. Presentation – People Asset Management (PAM) Occupational Health

Ms H Mackendrick and Mr M Sharp from PAM, the Council's new occupational health (OH) provider were in attendance and gave a presentation on the service they would deliver to the Council. The presentation covered PAMs experience providing OH services in Local Government; details of the team delivering the service; and the type of services to be provided such as absence management, health surveillance, fitness to work assessment and wellness monitoring.

In discussion, reference was made to difficulties in the past with employees that did not attend (DNA) OH appointments and it was queried how PAM could assist with this. In response, practical steps to address this included monitoring hotspots of DNA; dealing with cancelled appointments quickly which was one of the benefits of a remote and flexible OH service; access to employees mobile phone numbers when appointments were booked so that reminders could be sent; ensure employees are engaged and have confidence in the OH service. PAM electronic OH system could provide the Council with timely information in order to monitor DNAs, so that Managers could address any issues quickly. The trade unions support and assistance in trying to minimise DNAs was recognised.

The upskilling of Managers who were required to complete OH referrals was very important in order to get the expectations of the employee right at the start of the referral.

The Chair thanked the representatives from PAM for their informative presentation and the Council looked forward to working with them in the provision of OH services to employees.

4. Minutes of Last Meeting

There had been circulated for confirmation, Minutes of the last meeting of the Committee held on 17 March, 2023, the terms of which were **APPROVED**.

5. Matters Arising from the Minutes

i Additional Support Needs (ASN) provision – a separate meeting had been held with the Head of Secondary to discuss the ASN formulae used in schools. The Clerk on behalf of Mike Hayes, Unison recorded Mr Hayes thanks to both Fiona Grant and Anne MacPherson for arranging the meeting on 18 May which had been very informative and much appreciated. Reference was made to a report submitted to the Education & Learning Committee on 15 February, 2023 on 'Supporting Learners' which set out the Education Services new vision on ASN resources. A copy of the report would be circulated to Committee Members.

AM

ii Representation at Service Trade Union Liaison Meetings – Service representation at area meetings had now improved and this was welcomed. Attendance would continue to be monitored.

iii Solar Panels - it was noted that roof mounted solar panels had been disconnected as there was a potential fire hazard. A solution was currently being sought and the Energy team were surveying solar panel installations in the Council's estate to come up with an action plan to resolve the issue and ensure that solar panels were back operating again as quickly as possible.

6. **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 – 1 June, 2023;
- (ii) Inverness, Nairn, Badenoch & Strathspey – 31 May, 2023 ;
- (iii) Caithness, Sutherland and Easter Ross – 25 May, 2023

Service Trade Union Health and Safety Liaison Groups

- (iv) Health and Social Care Service – 3 April, 2022;
- (v) Communities and Places Service – 31 March, 2023;
- (vi) Education & Learning – 4 May, 2023
- (vii) Infrastructure & Environment – 5 May, 2023
- (viii) Performance & Governance, Resources & Finance and Depute Chief Executive Services – 12 April, 2023; and
- (ix) Housing and Property – 17 April, 2023.

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 Inverness, Nairn, Badenoch & Strathspey –

Nairn Balblair Depot – It was queried when the repairs to the roof of this depot were to be carried out. It was advised that the roof was wind and watertight at present but it was needing to be replaced. No funding had been allocated for this at present and would form part of the capital programme review. However, the Staff Side advised that there was water entering the depot from the temporary repairs to the roof. An undertaking was given to inspect the depot, establish what repairs were required and action these and it was noted there would be a recommendation in the capital programme review that the roof be replaced.

FM/TM

ii Caithness, Sutherland & Easter Ross -

Criminal Justice Service Accommodation – it was noted that the Criminal Justice team accommodation in the back building of Drummie offices was non-compliant. It was queried what actions were being taken to address this. It was advised that significant funding would be required to make this part of the building compliant. Therefore funding would be required to be found to carry out this work or relocate the Criminal Justice staff to other premises locally. The property rationalisation team were looking at this issue.

An undertaking was given by the Health & Social Care, Health & Safety Wellbeing Co-ordinator and the Property & Housing, Health & Safety Wellbeing Co-ordinator to liaise with the ECO Health and Social Care to determine the Criminal Justice teams service delivery and accommodation needs at Drummie and establish a solution to this issue as a matter of urgency. An update report on this would be submitted to the next meeting of the Committee.

**ECO HSC
/IK/FM**

iii Health & Social Care Service –

Fleet Hire – there were ongoing and persistent issues for Health and Social Care staff with hiring vehicles, with cars not being available and cancelled at short notice. It was advised that additional hired cars were being issued to the HSC Service.

All hired vehicles should have vehicle breakdown recovery details and vehicle handbook checklists were being reviewed so they were more appropriate to the vehicles being hired. The Service also wished to update the Fleet Management system and one of the applications in this would allow digital driver checks of hired vehicles via an App on employees smartphones.

iv Communities and Place

Amenities equipment -

There was additional funding towards new amenities equipment and the intention was to focus on battery-powered handheld trimmers etc which will be quieter, more environmentally friendly and reduce HAVS exposure. New vehicles would have charging packs for batteries and it was emphasised that these vehicles with additional charging packs should have fire safety checks on them prior to charging batteries.

CC

v Education -

ASSURE and Pupil Staff Incidents – The minutes referred to concerns from GMB members that the mechanism for the recording of incidents was not working very well. It's too easy for Head Teachers or managers to put a pen through an incident and not properly investigate it. There should also be feedback to Teachers when they reported incidents, to inform them of the outcome of the investigation into incidents. In response, it was emphasised that Head Teachers could not delete information from the

AM

Assure incident reporting system. Further guidance on the use of the Assure system would be issued to Head Teachers.

However, the Staff Side understood that Head Teachers could request that information be deleted from the system. It was highlighted that OH staff would not delete an incident without investigation and a reminder to this effect would be issued to OH staff.

GF

The issue of violence and aggression in schools and how to address this was being considered at a national and local level.

7. Update on Occupational Health, Safety and Wellbeing Issues

There was circulated Report No. CSC/4/23 by the Interim Head of People which provided an update on health and safety issues and developments for the Highland Council. A summary of the report was provided by the Occupational, Health, Safety and Wellbeing Manager.

It was highlighted that alternative ways of filling vacancies in the Occupational, Health, Safety and Wellbeing team were being considered.

The maintenance of system for assistance call alarm for accessible toilets was not currently part of any service contract. There was a need to identify the locations of these toilets and to ensure call alarms worked and were maintained. A request for funding for the service contract would be made.

The Committee:-

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

ii **APPROVED** the revised DSE guidance document;

iii **NOTED** the updates to the OHSW plan; and

iv **NOTED** that a request for funding for a service contract for assistance call alarm for accessible toilets would be made, and that the locations of these toilets and inspection to ensure the call alarms worked would be undertaken.

FM

8. Update on Occupational Health, Safety and Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) Services

There had been circulated Report No. CSC/5/23 by the Interim Head of People which provided an update on the work of the occupational, health, safety and employee assistance programme services.

It was highlighted that the Council had now engaged People Asset Management Occupational Health Solutions to deliver occupational health services.

The Committee **NOTED**:-

i the activity for Occupational Health for the period 2022/23; and

ii the updated position in reference to the Occupational Health contract.

9. Property Related Health and Safety Issues

There had been circulated Report No. CSC/5/23 by the Executive Chief Officer Housing and Property.

In particular, reference was made to a chemical contamination at Wick Community Campus. Refresher training with regard to chemical awareness and handling had been rolled out for operatives of pool plant. Also, as a result of this incident the OHSWM was to issue a safety alert with lessons learned.

Thanks were extended to property and education staff due to there being no Health and Safety Executive notices of contravention in relation to the control of asbestos.

It was a statutory requirement that portable appliance testing (PAT) was undertaken. It was highlighted that a report would be submitted to the Executive Leadership Team in July with a recommendation that an in-house team be established to manage PAT across the Council's General Fund estate. An update would be provided at the next meeting of the Committee. **FM**

Information was being collated from Services to refresh the responsible premises officer list for the Council's estate. An update on this would be provided at the next meeting of the Committee. **FM**

Two schools on the Council's estate (Charleston and Nairn) had been identified with potential serious flaws with concrete material. Inspections would take place over the summer period with a report and recommendations produced. An update would be provided at the next meeting. **FM**

The Committee **NOTED** the current levels of compliance and progress being made.

ii

10. Housing & Property Service Updated Occupational Health, Safety and Wellbeing Policy

There was circulated Report No. CSC/7/23 by the Executive Chief Officer Property and Housing which provided the updated Housing and Property Service, Occupational Health, Safety and Wellbeing Policy.

The Committee **NOTED** the Housing and Property Service, Occupational Health, Safety and Wellbeing Policy.

11. Council's approach to Scottish Fire and Rescue Service change in response to unwanted fire alarm signals

It was advised that the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) would no longer respond to unconfirmed automatic fire alarm signals, other than in residential premises. The Council had over 60 premises with automatic

fire alarms. The SFRS were expecting a fire to be verified or strongly indicated before they attended. There would be no change to premises that did not have automatic fire alarm detection.

Training would be provided to Fire Safety Advisers and Responsible Premises Officers (RPOs) and other designated staff within Services would also be asked to attend the training. Any advice and guidance to staff should also be forwarded to Members of the Committee.

RPOs would also be encouraged to undertake fire drills. The Council was looking to procure a contractor to deal with its fire alarm calls and intruder alarms.

OHSWM

The meeting concluded at 1.05 pm