

Minutes of Health and Safety Committee
Monday 3 August 2020, on Zoom

Present: Ewa Dennis (ED), Peter Dickinson (PD), Jenny Francis (JF), Geoff Hayden (GH), Dominique Kingsbury, Peter Mannings (PM) – Minutes, Graham Mully, Simon O’Hear (SOH – Chairman), Jeanette Lowden (JL).

1.0 Apologies: Paul Thomas-Jones (PTJ) and Steve Whinnett (SW)

2.0 Minutes of the last meeting

2.1 The Minutes of the 13 January 2020 meeting were agreed as an accurate record.

3.0 Matters Arising

3.1 PD referred to support for working from home. He said that the numbers of Officers attending Wallfields was low and the sharing of the available workspace had been very measured. He also said that risk assessments/DSE assessments had been completed for both working from home and Wallfields.

3.2 The Safety Committee was advised that with a 2 metre social distancing rule in effect, the maximum number of Officers that could work from Wallfields was 132. The Committee was also advised that the guardian G24 device contract had been extended by another year.

3.3 The Committee was advised that PD was leading on the procurement of a new device, with separate contracts for East Herts Council and Stevenage Borough Council. PD said that full fire marshal coverage was in place for Wallfields. The Committee noted that there were no abnormal numbers from

the accident and incident reports. There had been a drop in accidents due to the closure of the Leisure Centres.

3.4 The Committee was advised that further Health and Safety training had taken place before the lockdown restrictions commenced. H&S training will be delivered via e-learning where appropriate and plans to return to face to face training will be made in line with guidance, the HSE has allowed refreshers to be delayed without qualifications being lost i.e. First Aid at Work.

3.5 The Safety Committee was advised that checks on car insurance and MOTs were up to date as far as possible based on the current COVID-19 restrictions.

4.0 Tenant Representative Matters

4.1 ED reported that an appointments based system was now in effect at Buntingford Depot using an entrance that was accessible and feasible for all clients at the depot site. PD referred to the introduction of a one way system for accessing Wallfields whereby Officers could enter the main entrance and exit via the passage way adjacent to the caretaker's office.

4.2 PD was asked to circulate risk assessments for Wallfields and in particular for the reception area, these also available on the intranet. SOH confirmed that cleaners and other contractors had been informed of controls in place and had signed up to these through the FM management of the service.

Action: PD

5.0 COVID-19 Update

5.1 SOH confirmed that Leadership Team and the Executive had begun use the Council Chamber for appropriate meetings. The Committee was shown an example of the configuration of

the Council Chamber. The Safety Committee was advised that 23 people could be accommodated for meetings within allocated seating. It was not therefore possible however to stage full Council meetings in this room and the public could not yet be accommodated sufficiently.

5.2 SOH said that the Leader was keen to secure a return to the Council Chamber for management and executive meetings as well as Committee meetings. PD said that the plans were on the intranet for the Council Chamber and IT were directing Officers to the protocol for working from Wallfields. He thanked Jenny Francis and Jackie Bruce for their assistance with these protocols for safe working at Wallfields.

5.3 SOH referred to the pleasing partnership working and the subsequent risk assessments were very good and incorporated feedback given. The Safety Committee was advised that all of the generic risk assessments were in place before any work commenced and this had include validation with Unison.

6.0 Accident and Incident Reports

6.1 There were no accidents to report and 1 reportable accident in June 2020 which had required hospital treatment following a slip on site. PD said that forms had been submitted to the HSE and RIDDOR. The incident had occurred on a site visit and the Officer had since made a good recovery. This was an isolated accident and no remedial action was required.

7.0 Regulatory and Legislative Changes (Verbal Update)

7.1 PD referred to changes expected in building regulations following on from enquiry into the Grenfell Tower disaster and advised the committee these would be shared once published.

8.0 Health and Safety Inspections and Compliance Reports

8.1 SOH said that the requirement for home based DSE assessments during the restrictions had been waived but EHC was progressing with them alongside the wellbeing survey to ensure staff were supported appropriately. SOH said that DSE assessments had now been progressed and this process was working well with some further equipment or adjustments being identified and provided. PD was reviewing all DSE assessments and supporting both staff and managers as appropriate with practical solutions.

9.0 Property – Premises Maintenance and Repairs

9.1 Nothing to report. The Safety Committee was advised of the planned replacement of lighting to LED.

10.0 Facilities Management

10.1 The Safety Committee was advised that there were no major repairs to report. Screens had been installed at Wallfields for Customer Services and alternative arrangements had been made for the Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB).

10.2 The Safety Committee was advised that 20 to 30 Officers were working from Wallfields on a daily basis. SOH said that the available capacity did not have to be filled at Wallfields and staff will only be asked to work in the office where required due to work or to support their wellbeing.

10.3 SOH said that one option for Officers to consider was meetings in park settings with social distancing. He thanked the caretakers and Geoff Hayden for supporting Officers who working from Wallfields. Individual desks are identified and allocated to officers by the FM team to help support COVID security, HR are working jointly with FM/Corporate Property Manager to manage the staff spreadsheet which can only be

added to if the HOS authorised access. Office Protocols are in place which also have to read and confirmed before being authorised to come in.

- 10.4 SOH reiterated that Officers could not attend Wallfields without giving prior notice to Human Resources (HR), so that desk allocation could be made and planning for numbers attending Wallfields could be made if necessary.
- 10.5 PD praised the response of Officers to a small fire at Buntingford Depot. The Safety Committee was advised of the protocols in place for Officers and staff attending Buntingford Depot. SOH referred to the cleaning routine and he said that Perspex screens would take some time to arrive for the receptions.

11.0 List of Issues

11.1a. Employees side (UNISON):
None

11.2b. Management side:
None. SOH thanked Jackie Bruce for her/Unison's input.

12.0 Health and Safety Training

11.1 PD said that first aid refresher training had been arranged with the usual provider but has been postponed. PD referred to the reintroduction of e learning modules and said that 4 mandatory courses had been introduced which all Officers should have completed and that revisions would be made for next year.

13.0 Health and Safety Policy - Infection Control

13.1 SOH said that this policy along with the other 2 policies below will also be shared with LT for feedback before being finalised and implemented. Once Feedback has been reviewed and

policies updated they will need to be approved by this committee in line with other H&S policies which donot require Full Council Approval.

- 13.2 The Safety Committee were invited to email their thoughts on this policy. Action for all

14.0 Health and Safety Policy – Risk Assessment and Safe Systems at Work

- 14.1 The Safety Committee were invited to email their thoughts on this policy. Action for all

15.0 Health and Safety Policy – Unusual, Severe and Adverse Weather

- 15.1 The Safety Committee were invited to email their thoughts on this policy. Action for all

16.0 AOB

- 16.1 GM referred to training course that were available from the Insurance Company used by East Herts Council.

17.0 Date of Next Meeting

- 17.1 5 November 2020

The meeting closed at 15:13