

**Minutes of Health and Safety Committee**  
**Monday 18<sup>th</sup> January 2021, on Zoom**

**Present:** Simon O'Hear (SOH), Peter Dickinson (PD), Geoff Hayden (GH), Steve Whinnett (SW), Graham Mully (GM), Jennifer Francis (JF), Jackie Bruce (JB), Rob Allwood (RA), Rowan Perrin (RP), Chloe Hipwood-Norton (CHN), Tamara Jarvis (TJ), Kate Collins (KC)

**1.0 Apologies:** Ian Sharratt (IS), Paul Thomas-Jones (PTJ), Dominique Kingsbury (DK)

**2.0 Minutes of the last meeting**

2.1 The Minutes of the 19<sup>th</sup> October 2020 meeting were agreed as an accurate record.

**3.0 Matters Arising from the minutes**

3.1 None

**4.0 Tenant Representative Matters**

4.1 GH explained that CAB has now served their break notice with East Herts (which expires towards the end of May 2021). GH reported that they are still currently using the offices - around once a week and that they are following the usual Covid-19 safety procedures.

4.2 It was agreed by the group to keep this item on the agenda for the next meeting in April.

## **5.0 Q3 Health & Safety Report**

### **5.1 Work related accidents**

PD briefly ran through with the group any work related accidents that took place over the previous quarter. Prior to lockdown 2 and then 3, swimming pools reported a few everyday accidents such as banged heads/swallowed water etc, however there were no concerns regarding anything serious.

PD outlined that the swimming pools are currently closed but ongoing compliance inspection checks are still continuing. SLM are still performing all of their statutory functions.

### **5.2 Contract Management & Compliance**

#### **Buntingford Service Centre**

PD confirmed that the relining had now been completed which involved refreshing the pedestrian walk ways, traffic movement direction signs and the parking zones.

PD outlined that they are currently working on a premises information box which will be positioned at the front of building one. It will be positioned outside; accessible by the fire service should they ever need to come on site and will contain information on the location of water mains, electrical input, gas, distribution boards and high risk areas such as the vehicle workshop etc. PD explained that once the final document is ready it will be shared with Herts Fire & Rescue to see if there is anything they wish to add.

PD explained that we are enhancing CCTV coverage on site. The fire safety info on site has also been updated following a small fire that was well controlled by Urbaser.

JB queried how the fire suppression is coming on at Buntingford. GH said that they are not pursuing a fire suppression system; however they have got the revised agency permit across the line with some additional changes. They have installed additional fire hoses and additional flame detection and then when CCTV is finally connected to the internet it can be monitored by the Stevenage CCTV centre which will provide 24hr coverage in addition to existing monitoring.

CHN had a couple of outstanding issues. The first being hedging that needs cutting (operatives have to walk into the road to get around the car park) and this issue has been raised a number of times at depot meetings. The second issue is regarding the smoking area and the insurance requirements. GH explained that he is aware and has a health and safety meeting on Wednesday where both issues will be discussed further.

### **Parking Enforcement Contract**

PD outlined that works have been carried out following inspection; however there is nothing major or significant to report and at present no areas of concern. SW confirmed that the relining of St Andrew's street car park has now been completed.

## **Sport & Leisure Management Contract**

As previously outlined the swimming pools had to close again in Nov 20 due to the 3<sup>rd</sup> Covid-19 lockdown. RA explained that there hasn't been an official date set for the re-opening of the swimming pools. PD confirmed that SLM are still carrying out statutory inspections throughout the period of closure.

PD outlined that work is still on-going at Grange Paddocks and is progressing well.

**Action:** RA to arrange a tour of Grange Paddocks for SW and Mark Kingsland from Property.

## **Parks & Open Spaces Management**

SOH confirmed that the skate park at Hartham has now been closed and signs are up detailing this. Covid Marshalls are now focusing on these areas to patrol (note: we have 8 Covid Marshalls in total and Ben Wood and Nick Phipps are leading on the Covid Marshalls)

**Action:** PD to email Ben Wood for an update and to ensure COVID Marshall data is shared with him as H&S Officer alongside Environmental Health.

### 5.3 **On-going Projects**

#### **Hartham Play Area**

PD/RA visited last week to get an update. Development is very impressive and there is an article in today's 'Communication' all staff email regarding this. RA updated that the anticipated completion date on this is mid-February.

#### **Rectory Hall, Stanstead Abbots**

PD outlined that East Herts previously owned three hostels. Two were sold for re-development and one hostel was retained, which was Hillcrest. Rectory Hall has been re-purchased. PD updated that himself, GH and SW went on site recently with the rest of the property team to look at what work needs to be carried out going forward. PD outlined that work will start on the separate annex and Cedar Cottage. The final development of 11 apartments in Rectory, 4 rooms in the annex, 2 rooms in Cedar Cottage and the large external garage will be converted into an office and small meeting room for the onsite hostel officer. PD updated that a hostel officer has now been appointed. Work is due to be finalised by the end of January/beginning of February.

### 5.4 **Lone Worker Devices – Guardian 24 Update**

PD explained that the contract with Guardian 24 is due for renewal. At this stage, Stevenage Borough Council is not in a position to pursue a joint procurement with East Herts. SOH updated that we will be looking at a 3-4 year contract

provision. SOH said that everything is in place regarding the lone working devices and that staff are encouraged to use them. If they have any problems they should be flagging these to PD.

**Action:** PD to send JB and JF a copy of the draft specification via email with regard to the stakeholder group.

## 5.5 **Contract & Development Support for Leisure Development Projects / Capital Programmes**

TJ outlined that Northgate End construction is going very well. There are no safety or Covid-19 incidents that need reporting. RM submitted an updated report to PD last week.

TJ outlined that an extraordinary council meeting took place last week when there was a revised scope to the Arts Centre agreed. TJ gave the group a brief update on the current work.

TJ outlined that East Herts are going out to tender for the build contract for Hertford Theatre in February. The planning decision is now delayed until March, however should have a contractor on board by late spring/early summer.

## 5.6 **Learning and Development - Partnership training and future events**

PD updated that the e-learning modules have now been updated and open. Colleagues are now requested to undertake the modules that are relevant to them.

PD outlined that an asbestos awareness session took place via Zoom in mid-January which PD attended. The feedback from the participants was that the session was excellent and very engaging.

PD outlined that a project risk management session is planned for 26<sup>th</sup> January delivered by Gallagher Bassett – The course will be useful for anyone managing large projects. PD outlined that there will be a legionella risk management zoom course taking place in February which already has expressions of interest.

## **6.0 Covid Update**

- 6.1 SOH updated that line managers are not always flagging when someone in their team (who is WFH) gets Covid-19 and is then absent beyond logging it on MyView. SOH said it would be very useful if line managers could update HR with this information by flagging it to HR Officers so we can ensure awareness and support, this is done very well for Office based Staff but would be strengthened if managers flagged to HR. A weekly absence report will also be considered to be provided to LT each Friday as part their COVID weekly meeting. SOH updated that there had been 6 or 7 cases of Covid-19 amongst staff with one case involving a colleague who is now on long term sick due to the disease. SOH said that the FAQ sheet on the internet has been updated. SOH briefly went through the hygiene protocols (i.e. wiping shared tools and areas after use) that should be taking place in the office as transmission rates are currently very high and 70% more likely to be picked up.

6.2 SOH explained that all of Hertfordshire's District, Borough and County Council have now been asked by the NHS to gather a list together of staff that they would be willing to re-deploy to help with the Covid-19 crisis. This list has been created with what tasks need to be done and circulated to staff who would be interested to see what opportunities match their skill set. HR will be submitting details to HCC tomorrow with details of which staff could be redeployed for a 4-6 week period. Before any placement is agreed the Risk Assessment will be reviewed by PD with the member of staff to be redeployed, adjustments would be requested if appropriate in line with any individual needs. GM has confirmed he read the MOU between LAs and the NHS regarding redeployment which was currently being put in place and it had been checked with our insurers who have requested RAs are checked and confirmed before any placement progresses; this will be actioned as above.

## **7.0 Regulatory & Legislative Changes**

7.1 PD commented that there were no updates from either himself or PTJ.

7.2 GH outlined that the local fire brigade issued some guidance on automated calls for office buildings saying that if you do have a monitored alarm that goes to a call centre and they call the fire brigade they won't necessarily come out unless there is a follow up 999 call. Timing of this to roll out is possibly around April time. GH outlined that we will need to look at Fire Marshall Training regarding this and that 999 calls will be needed to make sure that the Fire Brigade arrive. PD explained that unless they know it's a drill, customer services will dial 999 and this is stated on the current safety notices.



**Action:** SOH requested that fire safety protocols are double checked, procedures are checked with customer services and then shared with JF and JB. PD to provide an update at the next meeting.

## **8.0 Health & Safety Inspections & Compliance Reports**

8.1 No update - already covered earlier in the minutes.

## **9.0 Property – Premises Maintenance & Repairs**

9.1 No update – already covered earlier in the minutes.

## **10.0 Facilities Management**

10.1 No update other than Charrington's is being checked by caretakers, just waiting to see what days the office may need to be opened for ad-hoc appointments.

## **11.0 List of Issues**

### **11.1a. Employees side (UNISON):**

None

### **11.2b. Management side:**

None

## **12.0 Health & Safety Training**

12.1 None

### **13.0 Health & Safety Policy – Bomb threats & Premises Evacuation**

13.1 PD explained that all five of the updated policies had been sent to this committee and the Leadership Team for comment and agreement, any changes requested had been considered and incorporated. JB from Unison requested that policies should state where appropriate that they would be subject to further review in line with agile working and remote working as this becomes established. This was particularly relevant to the H&S Policy - Workplace Environment (see 17 below).

13.2 SOH explained that it is this committee's role to give final approval which includes Unison agreement and then the revised policies will be published.

13.2 The Health & Safety Policy – Bomb threats & Premises Evacuation policy has been to Leadership Team and PD has made a couple of changes following this. No further comments or amendments from the group were suggested.

13.3 Updated Policy approved by the Safety Committee.

### **14.0 Health & Safety Policy – Work at Height**

14.1 No further comments or amendments made.

14.2 Updated Policy approved by the Safety Committee.

### **15.0 Health & Safety Policy – Young People at Work**

15.1 No further comments or amendments made

## **16.0 Health & Safety Policy – Manual Handling**

- 16.1 No further comments or amendments made
- 16.2 Updated Policy approved by the Safety Committee.

## **17.0 Health & Safety Policy – Workplace Environment**

- 17.1 JB requested that as part of introduction it was made clear this would be re-reviewed in line with any new workplace environment. This was agreed as an Action for PD to take before the revised policy was published.
- 17.2 Updated Policy with addition above approved by the Safety Committee.

## **18.0 AOB**

- 18.1 None

## **19.0 Date of Next Meeting**

- 19.1 PD and SOH to agree a date for the next meeting in April and to look at a non-Monday day of the week to accommodate PTJ. Tuesday looks like the best day of the week.  
**Updated after meeting as Tuesday 27<sup>th</sup> April at 11am**