

Minutes of Safety Committee
Tuesday 2nd November 2021, Hybrid on Zoom

Present: Simon O'Hear (SOH), Peter Dickinson (PD), Steve Whinnett (SW), Jennifer Francis (JF) (Unison), Rowan Perrin (RP), Geoff Hayden (GH) Dominique Kingsbury (DK), Brennel Bamfo (BB) (BB covering for TJ)

1.0 Apologies:

Graham Mully (GM), (RP), Paul Thomas-Jones (PTJ), Kate Collins (KC), Tamara Jarvis (TJ)

2.0 Minutes of the last meeting

The Minutes of the 27th July 2021 meeting were agreed as an accurate record.

3.0 Matters Arising from the minutes

None

4.0 Coronavirus Update

SOH updated the Committee on the revised office covid protocols that have been reviewed in line with current guidelines and will be monitored by the Health and Safety Officer, Head of HR and Leadership Team.

5.0 Regulatory and Legislative Changes (Verbal Report)

SW and PD updated the Committee on the forthcoming Building Safety Bill designed to create a clear, proportionate framework for the design, construction and management of safer, high-quality home and Fire Safety Act 2021 which came

into force in April 2021 as a result of the ongoing Grenfell Tower investigation.

Although these will not impact on the Council there is an expectation that further changes to Fire Safety and Building Regulations may eventually come into force.

6.0 Health and Safety Inspections and Compliance

PD to plan general inspections with SW and GH to agree dates.

7.0 Capital Project Updates /Contractor Health & Safety Compliance

SOH welcomed Brenell Bamfo who was attending on behalf of Tamara Jarvis. PD and SOH explained the reason for the Project Team's attendance at Committee is to provide feedback and updates on the Council's large capital projects.

7.1 Grange Paddocks

Work has been completed and the new Grange Paddocks Swimming Pool and Gym have opened. RP added that the Operations Team were exploring options to provide a fenced screen between the new play area and the nearby river.

Archaeological work has concluded and the next phase of the 3G pitch is in progress with plans being submitted for consideration at December's Planning Committee.

GH advised committee that the old Grange Paddocks building had been broken into and some minor damage caused to tiles, SLM have logged the issue.

7.2 Hartham Pool

The Health and Safety Officer received an update from Rob Allwood, Project Manager that work continues.

RA reported that Cadman discovered that the surface water drains had foul water flowing into them which is not what should be occurring and explains why water is constantly flowing through these drains and why there are blockages along the line. This discovery requires Thames Water to take urgent action as this falls under the category of 'pollution'.

On 8th September 2021 the project team met with an engineer from Thames Water who agreed to send a team to Hartham week commencing 13th September 2021 to unblock the drain and gave us verbal permission to over pump the surface water into the foul water chamber. This is typically not allowed as both surface and foul water must be kept separate but seeing as foul is present in the surface water it is now considered foul and having permission to do this frees us to start the drain diversion soon.

Thanks to colleagues in the Asset Management Team, Thames Water have attended site and managed to unblock 90m of the 100m sewer run in question.

The completion of the pool hall refurbishment has seen a number of delays due to issues with the pool hall floor tile works and more recently the pool tank lining which at present has set back the completion of phase 1 from the original finishing date of the end of August. RA stated that we are waiting confirmation on a new completion date.

7.3 Hertford Theatre – Growth and Legacy

Decontaminate UK have completed the removal of asbestos from the building and have vacated.

PD will be included in the next phase when the contractor for the main works has been appointed.

GH advised Committee that arrangements for managing the vacant building are unclear as the project team have stepped back until the appointment of a main build contractor has been undertaken. SW further added that there has not been a consistent line of communication since the project started and it was unclear who should be taking responsibility.

Property has made arrangements for security and GH is listed as the main out of hours contact.

PD expressed concern that there was no clear plan or direction and that it is essential the Property Team are involved in all projects where an asset will become the teams responsibility to manage.

SOH requested BB to raise issue of project ownership with TJ e.g. when a project reaches a pause in development who takes responsibility and ownership during the dormant phase.

Action: BB to discuss with TJ
GH to meet with TJ and GM re insurance

8.0 Northgate End

PD, SW and DK were invited to a tour of Northgate End MSCP on the 27th October with the Project Manager, Contractor Real

R, the Head of Operations, Project Team Members and the Parking Service Development Officer.

There have been no health and safety incidents to report.

9.0 Contract Health and Safety Compliance

9.1 Parks, Open Spaces and Play Areas

RP reported that an Urbaser vehicle reversed into a parked Glendale vehicle at Buntingford Depot with no injury.

RP also explained that Glendale is monitoring an issue with a resident who has taken umbrage against a Glendale operative.

There have been no accidents, incidents or near misses to report involving the contractor for parks, play areas and open spaces.

RP informed committee that the play area at Trinity Close, Bishops Stortford has been completed and that a planned tree planting event will be taking place on the 8th November. PD will be visiting the site on the 8th.

RP reported that the district tree risk is all up to date with no issues to report.

RP asked for the following addition to be recorded in the minutes. Glendale's next external Audit is 24th November

9.2 Shared Waste Service

PD reported that site re-lining has taken place and that additional, enhanced fire safety signs have been installed in the tipping hall.

9.3 APCOA

PD advised the Committee that there is currently an issue with a rough sleeper at Gascoyne Way MSCP but despite being approached by EHC's Homeless and Rough Sleeper Officer the occupant has refused to engage with us or other agencies.

DK explained that steps were now being taken with support from Legal to remove the occupant and that items being brought onto the site were being removed to prevent obstruction to fire escape routes, stairwell and the lifts.

DK advised committee that there were no other health and safety related incidents to report.

10.0 Property – Premises Maintenance and Repairs

SW advised committee that 6 car parks have been resurfaced in the district and that Jackson Square car park lighting has been upgraded to LED lighting. There were no property related issues and that property compliance checks were all up to date.

11.0 Facilities Management

GH reported no facilities management issues.

PD and GH to review occupancy capacity of existing meeting rooms in order to produce room infographics and guidance.

12.0 List of Issues

12.1 UNISON

JF advised committee that UNISON had no issues to report.

Action: None.

12.2 Management

PD would like to add the following to the minutes for Safety Committee and Leadership Team's attention:

A fire evacuation drill took place on 3 November 2021 at Wallfields, Steve Linnett was in attendance to support and observe.

Observations:

Clearance time: 4 minutes 54.69 seconds

Whilst there is no set time for evacuation; post war studies originally came up with a figure of two and a half minutes for a traditional building based on 2.5 minutes from the workplace to a place of comparative safety, an enclosed area protected to a half hour fire resisting standard, and could be an enclosed corridor or staircase. Then 30 minutes in a comparative safe area to outside the premises and finally to the ultimate safe area, the assemble point, with no time limit) based on a low risk building.

There was a general lethargy and apathy as people vacated the building.

Some people left via the staff entrance and proceeded right before stopping and turning left, then right again and clearly hadn't taken notice of signs.

Employees who left via the staff entrance gathered by the door instead of making their way to parking bay F. If the building were on fire they would have been showered by debris.

One person left in their vehicle during the drill (they have since apologised)

Some commented that they were waiting to be told what to do.

Given the relatively small number of people in the building at the time this was unacceptable.

Recommendations and Actions:

Additional directional signs have been ordered to provide better visibility and instruction.

Additional Assembly Point signs will be installed to highlight the location.

E-Learning Module – Fire Safety Awareness Training has been developed with emphasis on individual and collective responsibility.

Recommend consolidating the Fire Safety Signs by utilising the notice boards, moving non-essential information to secondary notice boards in the kitchens.

Weaknesses:

The role of Fire Warden has always been voluntary and reliant on goodwill. There are still a number of employees listed as Fire Wardens and an employee has since volunteered however with the new blended working arrangements fire marshalls may not always be present. The E-Learning Module highlights the importance of the responsibilities of all employees to ensure their own and others safety this will ensure all staff are trained and briefed.

A further practice drill will be run in late November once the signing is improved to improve the time and awareness. Regular practice drills will be run as well.

13.0 Q2 Health & Safety Report

PD took Committee through the Q2 report for the period July 2021 September 2021.

14.0 Work and Non Work related accidents

PD confirmed the following:

August

7 minor non reportable accidents reported across the 5 swimming pool and gyms. None as a result of any procedural or equipment related failure.

No accidents reported in respect to EHC employees or members of the public

September

6 minor non reportable accidents reported across the 5 swimming pool and gyms. None as a result of any procedural or equipment related failure.

No accidents reported in respect to EHC employees or members of the public.

October

11 minor non reportable accidents reported across the 5 swimming pool and gyms. None as a result of any procedural or equipment related failure.

No accidents reported in respect to EHC employees or members of the public.

The below normal level of reported accidents at the pools can be attributed to the closure of Hartham Pool and the transition from the old to new Grange Paddocks Swimming Pools.

15.0 Lone Worker Contract

PD updated committee and advised that the tender, evaluation and final moderation for the contract has been completed and following the assessments and final moderation the contract has been awarded to PeopleSafe.

Procurement for Housing is now drafting the final contract documents.

16.0 Learning and Development

PD advised that a three day first aid at work course has been held with 5 participants successfully qualifying. A one day

emergency first aid at work course was held for the Homeless and Hostel Team officers.

PD advised committee that a new e-learning module has been developed exclusively covering fire safety. The module will be tested before publishing on Skillsbuild as a new mandatory module.

PD would also like to advise the committee that Personal Safety Training is being looked at to support the launch of the new lone working contract.

17.0 A.O.B

The matter of out of hours arrangements for Hillcrest and Rectory Hall / Cedar Cottage was raised as it was brought to Committee's attention that no arrangements are in place.

Action GH

Property and FM through GH are asked to meet with Housing and Health to ensure this is managed.

18.0 Date of Next Meeting: 25th January 2022