

Minutes of Safety Committee
Wednesday 9th May 2023,
Meeting Room 1.15 / Microsoft Teams

Present: Peter Dickinson (PD), Simon O’Hear (SOH), Paul Thomas-Jones (PTJ), Jackie Bruce (JB), Ian Sharratt (IS), Emily Tickridge (ET), Steve Whinnett (SW), Chloe Hipwood - Norton (CH-N), Geoff Hayden (GH), Benjamin Wood (BW), Jeanette Lowden (JL) Waste Team,

Apologies: Rowan Perrin (RP), Jennifer Frances (Unison), Georgia Adamson (GA), Dominique Kingsbury (DK)

1.0 Minutes of the last meeting

The Minutes of the meeting held on 8th February 2023 were agreed as an accurate record.

Action: None

2.0 Matters Arising from the minutes

Last meeting actions below

Actions not on the agenda (see AOB section 13 as well):

- *GH to have a talk with project team to improve the link between property services and project team (no update at February meeting)*
- GH informed the Committee that discussions were now taking place with the Project Team and this was an ongoing matter, important for two way communication to be maintained.

3.0 Coronavirus / Office Housekeeping update

With all restrictions now lifted S O'H tabled that this item be lifted from future agendas. Office Housekeeping matters can be reported under Facilities Management.

S O'H advised Committee that he is currently producing a Blended Working Policy that will cover arrangements for home and office working.

Action: Remove 3.0 from future Agenda PD

4.0 Accidents, Incidents and Near Misses

PD will be submitting the H&S Annual Report incorporating the Q4 summary to Committee w/c 22.05.2023.

The H&S Officer can report that there have been no serious incidents or accidents reported other than very minor cuts etc and no action was required. In addition, the Health and Safety Officer can report that there have been no safety incidents or site accidents in respect to the major contracts or the current capital projects.

Action: Send H&S Annual Report incorporating the Q4 summary once agreed by LT to the Safety Committee PD

5.0 Regulatory and Legislative changes (Verbal report)

PD and PTJ reported no changes to Health & Safety legislation or regulations to update the committee with at this stage.

With regard to changes to fire safety legislation this does not directly affect the Council as it does not have any residential buildings that meet the high-rise criteria. As of January 23,

2023, the Fire Safety (England) Regulations 2022 mandates the installation of Wayfinding Signage in all high-rise residential buildings (18m in height or 7 storeys) in England as a legal requirement. The signage must include clear indications of floor numbers and individual flat numbers, this change was introduced as a result of the Grenfell fire.

PD reported that the new regulations do not affect Northgate End residential accommodation. GH advised that the Council have taken the pro-active step of ensuring that wayfinder signage has been installed in the residential accommodation.

The changes currently only affect residential buildings such as high-rise accommodation and not commercial or industrial premises.

It should be noted that the Property Services Team, Facilities Management Team and Health and Safety Officer have taken pro-active steps to introduce new controls ahead of possible further changes to legislation.

Action: None

6.0 Health and Safety Inspections and Contract Compliance

PD informed Committee that there are no issues requiring remedial or corrective actions following completed inspections and feedback from contract managers.

6.1 Buntingford Depot

PD informed the Committee that a number of emails had been received in respect to various issues at the site with vehicles and the housekeeping/cleaning on site. Vehicle concerns included: Parking at the entrance to the site from the A507, Bulk carrier vehicles parking on the footpath at the front

of building 01 (mixture of vehicles due on site and otherwise), Bulk carriers parking on the A507 due to the volume of vehicles using the site. There were also site housekeeping and office and WC hygiene and cleanliness. The H&S Officer carried out research to determine ownership of access land and compiled a report for the Contract leads at the depot outlining the findings so if issues continue they can be escalated appropriately.

PD expressed concern that bulk carriers parking on the footpath opposite the service road can obscure visibility for vehicles. C H-N advised that she will discuss the matter further with Urbaser (as lead site operative) and assured Committee that every effort is made to manage the timing and departure of bulk vehicles to and from the site (however it should be noted that factors such as road traffic accidents, traffic volume etc cannot be controlled so the schedule of arrivals can drift). Urbaser do everything possible to manage the arrival of vehicles and will monitor the matter, there is not room established on the site to act as a holding bay and there is a need for staff parking so no obvious space can be created. The matter will be monitored and an update provided to the next meeting. It was also noted that communication between the contractors on site has declined and needs to improve as had been previously established.

The issue of internal housekeeping and hygiene is an ongoing matter with cleaning (cover) not taking place when the regular cleaner is absent. A refund for work not done r has been achieved from the provide and is being used for some deep cleans. Concern about cover not being provided has been raised and the matter will be monitored. There are still issues with the standard of cleanliness in the male WC's inside the building, options to bring portable WC's are being considered as well as operating a key system to control access.

Site housekeeping in the yard where some concern has also been raised is the responsibility of respective contractors who should ensure rubbish is controlled and spillages etc managed.

C H-N advised Committee that there had been an incident involving an Urbaser operative being physically assaulted in North Herts and this is being investigated by local police, there had also been an incident of verbal abuse at crews. A public campaign is being launched for both North Herts and East Herts.

The following site items have been identified for attention. Property Services have put these items on the capital spend for approval by the Head of Strategic Finance and Property.

1. Workshop Heating
2. Remaining LED light upgrades
3. Installation of EV charging points
4. Feed to vehicle wash

6.2 Parks, Open Spaces and Play Areas

IS provided a report to the Committee on matters across the districts parks, open spaces and play areas.

IS informed Committee that Glendale have completed a schedule of programme of tree inspection work and that all significant risks have been dealt with.

Play area inspections have improved following a minor drop in service standards which has now been resolved.

Area Inspectors are continuing to undertake district wide inspections.

IS reported that Glendale had cut through a cable at the Hartham Pool site that feeds the temporary gym, no injuries or harm sustained but it was reported that the cable was not clearly marked. The contractor Cadman and Sport and Leisure Management are liaising with Glendale to ensure cables are clearly identified and marked.

The disabled WC at the pavilion is being repeatedly vandalised with fixtures and fittings being extensively damaged, a decision is being considered to close the facility with access provided instead to WC's at Hartham Leisure Centre (which are monitored).

A survey of bridges is scheduled to be undertaken to determine the condition of assets. JB advised IS that there may be access to Section 106 funding that could be used to repair or replace bridges.

IS raised a matter in regard to the structural integrity of Marshgate Bridge which provides the only access to Hartham Kingsmead. EHC do not own the bridge and the matter needs to be raised to the owner.

Actions:

IS to discuss Section 106 funding with JB

SW to speak to Estates and Asset Manager to confirm ownership which SW believed had been established and the owner will then written raising the concerns.

7.0 Capital Project updates/contractor Health & Safety Compliance

PD in the absence of BW (who left the meeting after 30 minutes) provided an update on current capital projects

Hartham

Project Manager attending site to discuss delays with the completion of the roof.

No site accidents or incidents to report

Soft handover scheduled for March / April 2024.

Hertford Theatre

No accidents or incidents to report

Minor construction snagging issues were picked up which were resolved immediately

Northgate End

GH advised that a number of snagging issues require attention as June is the defects liability period these include.

- Fault on internal phone handset
- Water ingress
- Fire alarm activations arising from water penetration
- Alarm response processes and procedures need to be established (GH felt that the Parking Contractor would be the best option).

Action: GH to liaise with DK/Parking Services to discuss operational response arrangements.

Northgate End – Commercial Unit

GH informed Committee that Launchpad has now relocated to the Northgate End commercial unit from Charringtons House. He has been working with the H&S Officer and Launchpad to put the necessary safety documents and safety procedures in place including arrangements for testing fire alarms, carrying out fire evacuation drills, procedures for out of hours use etc.

8.0 Property – Premise’s Maintenance and Repairs

SW advised Committee that there were no health and safety related issues to report.

Action: None

9.0 Facilities Management

GH advised Committee that cleaning standards at the Wallfields and Buntingford were an ongoing issue that was being monitored and raised with the providers.

Action: None.

10.0 List of Issues

10.1 Employee side (UNISON)

JB raised a question in respect to insurance management arrangements (following the departure of Insurance and Risk Business Advisor GM who used to sit on this committee), specifically in regard to claims management support and insurance checks during contract procurement. IS also stated that he had concerns with the gap created and had raised this with the Head of Operations.

SOH responded that this was not really a matter for the committee but concerns should be directed to the Head of Strategic Finance and Property who is responsible for this area and determined the work can be managed differently. IS asked that his concerns were included in an email and PD agreed to raise the matter.

Action: PD to send an email to the Head of Strategic Finance and Property with concerns raised.

10.2. Management side

No specific issues to raise. The H&S Officer advised Committee that new workstation chairs had arrived and would be deployed. Old damaged, redundant, and defective chairs are being removed for disposal.

Action: None

11.0 Health and Safety Training

Training modules on the E-learning platform have been updated through HR. PD has updated the Fire safety E-learning module to emphasise that everyone has a responsibility for safety and evacuation procedures (especially with Blended working meaning on site staff change), and this is explained in the module with appropriate guidance. A new Display Screen Equipment E-Learning module has been developed and will be released to support staff further in this area on the new Skillgate e-learning platform.

Community Safety accreditation scheme training has proven difficult to secure now that the Police are no longer making arrangements. Various providers have been identified but costs are high and include travel costs as there is not a suitable local provider or an online option. SW the Licensing and Enforcement Officer has been working with the H&S Officer on this matter. Consideration is now being made for SW to develop a suitable course from the training she has undertaken which could then be delivered internally and offered externally to other local accredited organisations.

Action: PD to work with SW and update the safety committee once consideration has taken.

12.0 AOB

12.1 CO2 Detectors

GH confirmed that these will be installed within the Wallfields building by the end of May 2023 with clear signage. A message will be drafted for distribution by the Communications Team explaining the purpose of the monitors, why the alarm may sound and arrangements for taking readings will be put into place. If there are consistently high levels recorded, then the monitors audible alert alarms will be set. IS asked why CO2 might be an issue. PD advised this is due to the lack of ventilation within the building and staff are not opening the windows enough CO2 levels can rise and cause fatigue/headaches and make staff feel unwell. The monitors therefore support the need to maintain ventilation.

JB asked if ventilation was still an issue in the Customer Services Office as staff had raised some concern. BW advised that CO2 readings in the Customer Services Office have been regularly taken and were within acceptable levels and monitoring will continue.

13.2 E-Vehicles

IS advised Committee that the lease company will not permit the carrying of animals in the lease (car) E-Vehicles so an alternative E-vehicle (van), suitable for this purpose is being sourced from the leasing company as an alternative to outsourcing this work to another provider.

E-Vehicles have now been marked with high visibility notices and a demountable strobe light bar on licensing and enforcement vehicle. PD is currently producing a corporate risk assessment on E-Vehicles

Action: PD to prepare and distribute E-Vehicle Risk Assessment

13.3 Election Duties

Members of Safety Committee reported that concerns had been received from employees who supported the local elections in respect to the number of hours officers worked from the opening of polling stations to count duties after polls closed. Some employees reported fatigue concerns about driving home.

Action:

S O'H to check position with regard to Working Time Directive in terms of breaks, night working, potential opt outs etc. Once this is gathered PD will send an email to the Head of Legal and Democratic Services with the guidance and concerns raised.

Date of Next Meeting: 8th August 2023 @ 14:00pm

Meeting Room – Mimram Room, 1st Floor, Old Building

and

Microsoft Teams meeting

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