

## **COUNCIL HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMITTEE**

**Wednesday, 10th February, 2021**

Present:-

Ade McCormick (Chair)

Councillors	Barr Blank Brittain	Councillors	K Falconer J Innes P Niblock
Liz Cook	Housing	Dave Poole	OSD
Neil Johnson	Economic Growth	Tony Devereux	Unison
Anthony Radford	Arts & Venues	Andrew Fowler	Unison
Donna Reddish	Policy & Comms	Karen Knight	Unison
Matt Sorby	Corporate Property	Paul Longley	Unison
Heather Spink	HR	Liam Rich	UNITE
Ian Waller	Health & Wellbeing	Marc Jasinski	H&S Advisor
Shirley Hallam	Environmental Serv		

### 12 **APPOINTMENT OF JOINT CHAIRS**

In accordance with the Committee's constitution Councillor Sharon Blank, Ade McCormick and Andrew Fowler were confirmed as the Joint Chairs of the Committee.

### 13 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Kate Harley, Rachel O'Neil, Rachel Turner, Robert Wilkes and Paula Stephens.

### 14 **MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 11 NOVEMBER, 2020**

The minutes were agreed as a true record, subject to the following amendment:

Minute No. 5 – the third bullet point under Commercial Services to read: "An amber letter had been issued to Wards and the situation was being monitored closely."

## 15 **MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES**

There were no matters arising from the minutes.

## 16 **MANAGEMENT TEAM REPORTS**

Written reports were submitted by members of the Council's Corporate Management and Senior Leadership Teams to update the Committee on health and safety matters from their service areas during the previous quarter.

The reports provided information on workplace inspections, specific incident investigations, training and communications.

The key points raised from the reports were as follows:

### Commercial Services

- Tool box talks had been continued to update staff and good progress had been achieved on completion of training.
- Training on ROSPA playground inspections had been paused due to Covid restrictions.
- Copies of the gas leak investigation findings, of Capital Works Supervisors' site inspections and a sample of Environmental Services Supervisors' site inspections were attached to the report, and the investigation team were congratulated on their report.

### Digital, HR and Customer Services

- The Business Transformation team had been involved in Covid secure audits across the Council to help re open premises and to ensure ongoing compliance with Covid arrangements, including supporting election preparation with risk assessments for all proposed polling station locations.

### Economic Growth

- Workplace inspections had been deferred as staff mainly working from home.
- Contractors were progressing the Northern Gateway, the Elder Way / Packers Row public realm works, the Chesterfield Hotel demolition and the Waterside office schemes – Woodheads had achieved 'excellent' in the initial Considerate Constructor Scheme assessment.

- No accidents / incidents had been reported on the contractor sites, and it was agreed to check the contractors' monthly inspection reports to ensure accurate recording.
- The CDM Register would be updated to include changes of client officers and F10 officers.
- The Chesterfield Hotel site had been in a poor condition when the Council took ownership, but security had been improved and demolition works were being safely progressed.

#### Health & Wellbeing

- There had been limited opportunities for workplace inspections due to the Covid restrictions and most staff working from home.
- Online training had been largely brought up to date and leisure services staff had continued to complete weekly learning and development activities as required by the National Pool Lifeguard Qualification.
- Regular communications had been maintained, focusing on Covid compliance measures, especially for Environmental Health and Licensing services.

#### Housing

- Inspections of workplaces had been undertaken (except Fountain House which remained closed) with emphasis on Covid safety and compliance.
- Regular inspections had been carried out, with further investigations and remedial actions taken where required, including revised processes and systems for management of legionella following an incident at Markham Court and arrangements to ensure that safe working practices were being followed on contractor sites.
- There had been significant progress on the completion of online training.
- Regular team meetings had continued and display screen assessments and stress risk assessments had been updated.

#### Policy & Communications

- Risk assessments had been reviewed to take account of changing levels of Covid restrictions, impacting particularly on revised arrangements for working with media organisations and for virtual committee meetings and Democratic Services support to elected Members.
- Online training was up-to-date.

- Arrangements had been made for DJCC meetings for 2021 under the new structure.
- Key health and safety messages communicated through weekly manager and Member bulletins and updated on Aspire.
- Expectations clarified re health and safety, including Covid-safety and emergency planning / business continuity.
- It was confirmed that the health and safety function would be part of the new Corporate Service Directorate and that it was continuing to be supported by the Service Director – Leisure, Culture and Community Wellbeing during the current transition.

#### Arts and Venues

- The Venues had been closed since 5 December, 2020 and Hasland Village Hall and the Assembly Rooms had only been open for use by support groups.
- The rest rooms had remained closed and external locks changed to improve security. Some of the rest rooms were due to be used for the May 2021 elections and would require deep cleaning and updated assessments.
- The large majority of staff had updated their training as required, including those working from home or on furlough.
- The fire alarm system at the Pomegranate Theatre had been upgraded in November, 2020.

#### Resources

- Risk assessments had been updated to take account of Covid restrictions and additional equipment made available for staff working from home.
- All staff were up-to-date with their online training.
- Risk assessments were being undertaken for the elections and counts in May, 2021, taking account of national guidance and with emphasis on Covid-safety. Further details would be provided in the next quarterly report. Current guidance did not allow door-step campaigning or leaflet distribution (other than by recognised postal services).
- Future health and safety inspections and reports would be aligned to the new Service Director portfolios.

## 17 **INCIDENT/ACCIDENT INFORMATION**

The Corporate Health and Safety Advisor presented a report on the number of incidents/accidents over the period 1<sup>st</sup> October to 31<sup>st</sup>

December, 2020. The number of incidents reported for the quarter was significantly lower than for the same time last year due to the majority of the period having been subject to lockdown or Tier 3 Covid restrictions, with many services closed to the public and staff working from home.

There had been no RIDDOR reportable incidents.

There had been a slight increase in incidents of verbal abuse, most by phone.

There had been a reduction in the cumulative year-to-date incident totals up to the end of December, 2020 from 201 to 162 compared to the year-to-date incident totals reported in the previous quarter.

A question was raised regarding an incident of a dog attacking wildlife in a country park. The Corporate Health and Safety Advisor agreed to review with the Parks and Open Spaces team the measures in place to seek to prevent and investigate such incidents.

## 18 **OCCUPATIONAL ILL HEALTH STATISTICS**

The Human Resources Business Partner presented a report detailing the occupational ill health statistics for the quarter 1<sup>st</sup> October to 31<sup>st</sup> December, 2020 and cumulative statistics for the year 1<sup>st</sup> January to 31<sup>st</sup> December, 2020.

It was noted that the number of incidences of musculoskeletal related absence had decreased by almost 50% from the last quarter, but that the number of days of absence for this reason had increased significantly (45%), possibly as a result of staff returning from furlough. Support was being offered through the Occupational Health provider and use of physiotherapy to enable staff to return to work safely.

Support for staff working from home was continuing with provision of equipment, regular reviews of DSE and agile working assessments, and guidance and webinars were being planned.

Stress had been the most common reason for absence in the quarter, and while incidences of stress overall had reduced, incidences of work-related stress had increased significantly. Support had been provided with access to counselling and the Employee Assistance Programme and all staff had since returned to work.

The HR team was working with managers to improve the recording of whether incidences were work-related or not, and the roll out of the My View absence and leave management system should facilitate this.

There had been a rise during the quarter in the number of staff (213) having to self-isolate as a result of COVID-19, mainly in Commercial Services due to the nature of the work and the number of staff required to be present in the workplace. The Employee Assistance Programme had been extended to provide access to counselling and advice / resources.

Clarification was requested on the recording of staff testing positive for Covid and whether this was work-related. (It was confirmed post-meeting that no positive cases had been identified as work-related, but that staff had needed to self-isolate as a result of contact with other staff who had subsequently tested positive.) This would be reviewed through the Resources Task and Finish Group, and the importance of trade union representatives being involved in the investigation of such incidents was stressed.

## **19 REVIEW OF CONSTITUTION OF CORPORATE HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMITTEE**

The Corporate Health and Safety Advisor presented an updated version of the Committee's constitution, taking account of recent changes in the corporate management structure.

Subject to a minor amendment to include brief details of the membership and role of the Health and Safety Forum Group, the revised constitution was approved.

## **20 COVID-19 UPDATE REPORT FROM RESOURCES TASK AND FINISH GROUP**

The Executive Director presented a verbal update on the work of the Council's Resources Task and Finish Group on responding to the Covid-19 pandemic. The group included Trade Union representatives and met weekly to address emerging issues.

The group distributed information and guidance received from central government and reported progress weekly to the Corporate Management Team. It monitored the statistical data to identify any hot-spots and

supported service teams in ensuring risk assessments were updated and actions taken where necessary.

A rapid testing centre had now opened at Queens Park Sports Centre for staff who were working in frontline roles to be tested twice per week, with further details available on Aspire. The centre was also available for community testing.

Consideration was also being given to Covid-safe arrangements for the elections in May, 2021.

The group continued to work closely with the Local Resilience Forum, including other external partners in preparing future options based on the latest data and forecasts.

It was agreed that an update report from the Resources Task and Finish Group be included on the agendas of future meetings of the Health and Safety Committee and that a report on lessons learned from the work of the group be provided to the next meeting of the Committee.

## **21 CDM UPDATE REPORT**

Andrew Fowler presented a verbal update on the implementation of the CDM policy.

Two stakeholder training sessions and one client training session had been held, with a total of 29 attendees.

Audits of CDM processes with colleagues from Bolsover District Council had been undertaken and it was agreed that these be continued over the next few months.

## **22 DATE AND TIME OF THE NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting of the Committee would take place on Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> May, 2021 at 9.30am.