

COUNCIL HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMITTEE

Wednesday, 11 August, 2021

Present:-

Andrew Fowler (Joint Chair)

Councillors	Barr Blank	Councillor	P Niblock
Liz Cook	Housing	Tony Devereux	Unison
Stephen Wenlock	Economic Growth	Gurpreet Khakh	Unison
Donna Reddish	Policy & Comms	Jane Fisher	Unison
Heather Spink	HR	Karen Knight	Unison
Marc Jasinski	H&S Advisor	Paul Longley	Unison
Ade McCormick	Executive Director	Gurpreet Khakh	Unison
Mick Blythe	Client Manager	Ian Waller	Leisure, Culture and Community Wellbeing

*Matters dealt with under the Delegation Scheme

23 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Brittain, Rachel O'Neil and Neil Johnson.

24 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 19TH MAY 2021

The minutes of the meeting on 19th May 2021 were agreed as a true record.

25 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

There were no matters arising from the minutes.

26 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:

Corporate

- Joint Health and Safety inspection planned for 4th October 2021
- One incident reported involving verbal abuse. Jointly investigated by management and trade unions with resulting action plan put in place
- PDR's 100% complete with health and safety objectives built into every personal development plan
- 4 outstanding training elements were reported at the end of Q2 but these were completed in July
- Delivery of safe Full Council meeting in July following return to face to face committees. Risk assessments carried out with alternative location being chosen to hold meeting.
- The Tier 4 restructure has enabled a designated focus on health and safety through the new role of Health, Safety and Risk Manager with the recruitment for this role planned for September

Finance

- The new Service Manager for Finance has been appointed and due to join in September
- Plan to re-engage regular health and safety inspections as staff start to return to office
- Risk assessments had been confirmed as all up to date
- No incidents / accidents had been reported
- Online training largely up to date with only 1 outstanding element attributed to a new starter
- Directorate DJCC meetings programmed for the year
- Emergency Plan / Business continuity activity for new Directorate completed

Economic Growth

- Workplace inspections that had been deferred as staff mainly working from home are due to recommence in September
- Online training is up to date with just 1 course outstanding in Q2
- Future reporting to include details of classroom / structured training events
- Risk assessments confirmed as up to date
- No accidents / incidents had been reported
- Woodhead continue with the construction of Northern Gateway Enterprise Centre on the Holywell Cross
- Danaher and Walsh continue to deliver the public realm works on Elder Way and Packers Row
- CBC employees within Economic Growth are starting to consider how they return to the Town Hall when appropriate to do so

Leisure, Culture and Community Wellbeing

- Regular inspections had been carried out in Q2
- Annual inspection planned for September
- Covid risk assessments had been completed and all were up to date
- There had been 1 incident reported involving manual handling. Toolbox talk/training delivered
- Significant numbers of training modules completed with continued push to clear outstanding courses
- Training matrix in place to identify high risk areas
- Large amount of comms across all areas
- Directorate introducing monthly focus on health and safety with initial 3 topics Slips, trips and falls, COSHH and PPE/First aid

Housing

- Investment and Assets Town Hall G28 joint inspection completed in April
- Housing Property Operations joint inspection completed in June
- There were 236 audits completed in the quarter
- 12 Incidents reported in quarter mainly involving manual handling and driving
- Every incident now to be reviewed by Property Management Team to ensure any required actions / learnings can be taken
- Managers have identified gaps in training within their teams and established a training matrix
- Improved compliance on online training has been seen but push continues to clear outstanding training elements
- CDM training planned across August and September
- Focus on health and safety maintained through PDR process
- Regular communications and team meetings had continued, focusing on H & S and Covid compliance measures
- Reports of Anti-Social Behaviour have increased with comms focussed on employee support and

Digital, HR and Customer Services

- No incidents had been reported
- Joint quarterly inspection completed in June
- All risk assessments have been brought up to date following latest national update on Covid restrictions
- Key staff are being released for regular asymptomatic testing – weekly
- 10 days lost time due to isolation re one covid positive test within TH Premises team

27 **INCIDENT/ACCIDENT INFORMATION**

The Corporate Health and Safety Advisor presented a report on the number of incidents/accidents over the period 1st April to 30th June 2021. The number of

incidents reported for the quarter was 45 which was an increase of 24 on the previous quarter. It was reported that this increase was not unexpected following the easing of restrictions as more Council premises re-opened and more employees returned to the workplace.

There had been 2 RIDDOR reportable incidents over the quarter and 3 lost time incidents where an accident had led to an injury that resulted in the employee taking time off work.

It was noted that not all returns to work had been reported on the SHE system and a reminder for team managers to complete this stage should be issued by Service Directors.

28 **OCCUPATIONAL ILL HEALTH STATISTICS**

The Human Resources Business Partner presented a report detailing the occupational ill health statistics for the quarter 1st April to 30th June, 2021.

It was noted that Q2 had seen a decrease in the number of occurrences of self-isolation as a result of COVID-19 with a total of 49 periods of isolation between 1st April 2021 and 30th June 2021 which was less than half identified in the previous quarter. More than 50% of isolations as a whole during this quarter were as a result of either the employee's household members and/or support bubble members displaying symptoms, or via Test & Trace as a result of close contact with a positive case.

Support continues for employees that have been absent following a positive test result with phased returns, as exhaustion is apparent after contracting the virus and a gradual introduction into the workplace supports employees in coming back to working life.

The average days lost per occurrence for MSK within the quarter is 16 days, with 4% of days lost being work-related.

The most common reason for absence and most days lost in Q2 that had been categorised as 'work related' was 'stress/anxiety/depression/mental health' accounting for 20% of all days lost to sickness absence.

To support staff HR continue to work closely with Line Managers to monitor sickness absence, promote the newly introduced Mental Health First Aider programme, the Employee Assistance Programme and ensure the relevant support mechanisms are in place to support employees returning to work.

During Q2 changes have been made to the MyView system to support the recording of sickness absence as either work related or not work related. The Payroll and Systems Development Manager and Assistant HR Business Partner continue to work with managers to ensure data is recorded correctly and identify where information is missing so that the integrity of the data is maintained.

29 **HEALTH, SAFETY AND RISK MANAGER ROLE**

The Service Director provided an update on the new Health, Safety and Risk Manager role which had been enabled through the Tier 4 restructure and had been identified to strengthen and support health and safety across all areas.

Recruitment is in progress with interviews / assessments planned for 10th September.

30 **CORONAVIRUS STAGE 4 WORKING OPS/ARRANGEMENTS**

The Executive Director presented an update on next steps for working arrangements with decision made to retain “Covid-secure” office based guidance/risk assessments until further notice. Staff who can work from home should continue to do so and staff who come into the workplace should follow existing H & S arrangements.

Focus remains on the re-opening of Venues and relaxation of restrictions at Leisure Centres with all risk assessments and guidance reviewed and approved. Co2 measurement and control at Theatres following H & S guidance with investment in new equipment to monitor and trigger response.

Other venues such as VIC and Museum under review and frontline services are reviewing their arrangements in line with guidance.

Next steps include Civic events and similar activities, working with CLT to consider further lifting of restrictions post 16th August and supporting the development of “new ways of working” planning.

31 **DATE AND TIME OF THE NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting of the Committee would take place on Wednesday 10th November, 2021 at 9.30am.