

Health and Safety Sub-Committee

Minutes of a meeting of the **Health and Safety Sub-Committee**, facilitated by Microsoft Teams virtual meetings platform on **Monday 21 June 2021** at **4.00pm**

Present: **Councillors**

Chair Gary Quilter (employees' side)

Vice Chair Ian Houlder (employer's side)

Members (employer's side)

Elaine McManus

Robert Nobbs

Staff representatives (employees' side)

Lance Alexander

In attendance

Carol Bull, Cabinet Member for Governance

54. **Substitutes**

The following substitution was declared:

Natasha Holdgate substituting for Nigel Dulieu (Employees' side).

55. **Appointment of Chair: 2021-2022**

It was proposed by Lance Alexander, seconded by Councillor Robert Nobbs and with the vote being unanimous, it was

RESOLVED:

That Gary Quilter be elected as Chair of the Health and Sub-Committee for 2021-2022.

Gary Quilter then took the Chair for the remainder of the meeting.

56. **Appointment of Vice-Chair: 2021-2022**

It was proposed by Councillor Elaine McManus, seconded by Councillor Robert Nobbs and with the vote being unanimous, it was

RESOLVED:

That Councillor Ian Houlder be elected as Vice-Chair of the Health and Sub-Committee for 2021-2022.

57. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor John Smith and from Nigel Dulieu, Paul Goodspeed, and Stephanie Grayling.

Councillor Cliff Waterman was also unable to attend the meeting.

58. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 8 February 2021 were confirmed as a correct record by the Chair.

59. Declarations of interest

Members' declarations of interest are recorded under the item to which the declaration relates.

60. Minutes of the meeting of West Suffolk Health and Safety Group: 4 May 2021

The Sub-Committee received and noted paper number: HSS/WS/21/004, which were the minutes of the West Suffolk Health and Safety Group meeting held on 4 May 2021.

61. Employee and members of the public incident's statistics

The Sub-Committee received and noted report number: HSS/WS/21/005, which provided statistics relating to accidents/incidents involving West Suffolk Council employees and members of the public from 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021.

The Service Manager (Health and Safety) drew relevant issues to the attention of the Sub-Committee, including providing details of the types and locations of accidents/incidents of employees and members of the public during the reporting period. He then reported the number of days lost due to workplace accidents/incidents and compared them with statistics from the past three years.

The Sub-Committee considered the report in detail and asked questions to which the Service Manager (Health and Safety) provided comprehensive responses. In particular discussions were held on the various types of violence at work incidents being reported; which service areas were being affected by violence at work and whether employees received wellbeing checks, to which the Service Manager provided responses.

There being no decision required, the Sub-Committee noted the contents of the report.

62. Legislation Updates (Verbal)

The Service Manager (Health and Safety) advised that there were no legislation updates to report.

63. Covid-19 Update (Verbal)

The Sub-Committee received a verbal update from the Service Manager (Health and Safety) on Covid-19 as follows:

- Continue to provide guidance and support across the council.
- Continue to carry out generic risk assessments.
- Continue to procure Personal Protective Equipment (PPE).
- Lateral Flow Tests (LFT): Staff were being asked to do a LFT if they were coming into any of the officers.
- Mobile LFT unit: This had been organised through Suffolk County Council. The mobile unit visited the Waste Hub on Monday's and Thursdays, to test staff. However, the council was waiting to hear when this would finish, then staff at the Waste Hub would have to revert back to using home LFT kits.

The Sub-Committee considered the verbal update and asked questions to which the Service Manager (Health and Safety) provided responses.

In response to a question raised about staff returning to the offices, members were informed that "agile working" was being introduced which was more flexible, as some staff find it difficult to work from home. The plan was to have a desk booking system at West Suffolk House and at the Mildenhall Hub.

There being no decision required, the Sub-Committee noted the verbal report.

64. Health and Safety Training (Verbal)

The Sub-Committee received a verbal report from the Service Manager (Health and Safety) on the following training updates:

- 1) IOSH (Managing Safely): 12 people attended and passed the face-to-face training course held in April 2021.
- 2) E-learning courses.

There being no decision required, the Sub-Committee noted the verbal report.

65. Health and Safety Corporate Update including Health and Wellbeing (Verbal)

The Sub-Committee received a verbal report from the Service Manager (Health and Safety) on health and safety corporate updates and wellbeing as follows:

- 1) Inspections, Audits and Fire Risk Assessments
- 2) Projects / Events: Provided advice on various projects, for example, the Elections and the Mildenhall Hub.

- 3) Support to third party clients
- 4) Reactive work
- 5) Occupational health
- 6) Wellbeing: Continue to work with all staff on wellbeing.
- 7) Drugs and alcohol: 24 random tests and pre-employment tests were carried out, which were all negative.

There being no decision required, the Sub-Committee noted the verbal report.

66. Health and Safety Lessons Learnt (Local Authority Specific) (Verbal)

The Sub-Committee received a verbal report from the Service Manager (Health and Safety) on the following health and safety updates:

- 1) Health and Safety Executive (HSE): Members of Parliament were told that Covid-19 had highlighted a HSE funding crisis. The HSE had suffered cuts of 54% since 2010, reducing the ability of the HSE to respond to the virus. The majority of proactive site visits conducted by the HSE in response to Covid had been conducted by external contractors, such as debt collection agencies.
- 2) Waste collection firm: A waste collection firm in Luton has been ordered to pay nearly £2m in fines and costs after being found guilty of health and safety failings following the death of a binman. The brakes on the lorry's second axle were faulty and a mechanism that prevented the bin lift being operated when the vehicle was in gear had been disabled.
- 3) Wearing of face coverings: A lorry driver who was sacked after refusing to wear a facemask inside his cab on a client's site was fairly dismissed. The case was believed to be the first time a tribunal had ruled on facemask refusal.
- 4) Drone users: New rules came into force in January 2021 governing how pilots can operate their drones. A major change was the removal of the distinction between commercial and recreational use, which might result in an increase in drone uses. The new rules also make it clear where drones can be flown, whilst also making tracing of ownership more streamlined. Under the new rules, even small drones will need to be registered with the relevant aviation authority, which in the UK was the Civil Aviation Authority. This is to ensure authorities can trace who owns a drone if they are used in an irresponsible way or flown somewhere, they are not allowed to be used.

There being no decision required, the Sub-Committee noted the verbal report.

67. **Dates of future meetings**

The Service Manager (Health and Safety) informed the Sub-Committee that he proposed changing the meeting scheduled for 10 January 2022 to 14 February 2022.

The Sub-Committee agreed to the proposed date change and noted the dates as follows for future meetings, as listed below.

All dates were Mondays starting at 4pm as indicated:

- 11 October 2021 (Virtual meeting)
- 14 February 2022 (Virtual meeting)

The meeting concluded at 5.15 pm

Signed by:

Chair
