

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 10 October 2022** at **4.00pm**

Present: **Chair** Ian Houlder (employer's side)
Vice Chair Nigel Dulieu (employees' side)

Members (employer's side)

Nick Clarke

Andy Neal

Robert Nobbs

Cliff Waterman

Staff representatives (employees' side)

Sylvia Bayford

Stephanie Grayling

Gary Quilter

Andrew Samson

In attendance

Carol Bull, Cabinet Member for Governance

107. **Substitutes**

No substitutions were declared.

108. **Apologies for absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor James Lay.

Lance Alexander (staff representative) was also unable to attend the meeting.

109. **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 20 June 2022 were confirmed as a correct record by the Chair.

110. **Declarations of interest**

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

111. **Minutes of the meeting of West Suffolk Health and Safety Group: 31 August 2022**

The Sub-Committee received and **noted** report number: HSS/WS/22/008, which were the minutes of the West Suffolk Health and Safety Group meeting held on 31 August 2022.

The Sub-Committee asked questions in relation to the incident at Nowton Park, to which the Service Manager (Health and Safety) provided a response.

112. **Employee and members of the public incidents**

The Sub-Committee received and **noted** report number: HSS/WS/22/009, which provided statistics relating to accidents/incidents involving West Suffolk Council employees and members of the public from 1 April 2022 to 31 July 2022.

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 reported the number of days lost due to workplace accidents/incidents and compared them with statistics from the past three years.

He then briefly reported on the Health and Safety Executive fatal injuries to workers in Great Britain for the period 2011 – 2012 to 2021-2022. There were 171 work related fatalities in 2011 to 2012 compared to 123 in 2021 to 2022. The construction industry was the main contributor for fatalities.

The Sub-Committee discussed the report in detail and asked questions to which responses were provided. In particular discussions were held on the multiple verbal abuse incidents reported in relation to one person who had now been served with a cease-and-desist letter; and the 19 days lost due to an employee incident.

113. **Health and Safety Policy - Verbal**

The Sub-Committee received a verbal report from the Service Manager (Health and Safety) advising that the Health and Safety Policy had been updated so that it was more accessible, meaning no matter what your disability you should be able to read the policy which was available on the Council's website and Intranet.

In response to a question raised regarding contractors, the Sub-Committee was advised that links to the Health and Safety Policy were sent to the Council's contractors.

In response to a questions raised stating the Health and Safety Policy was not accessible on Google, the Service Manager (Health and Safety) agreed to raise this with the Communications Team to look into further.

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

114. **Legislative Update (Verbal)**

The Sub-Committee as informed that there were no legislative updates to report on at the present time, and nothing expected in the near future.

115. **Health and Safety Training (Verbal)**

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

- 1) IOSH Managing Safely: This had been scheduled for 29-31 March 2023.
- 2) Event Safety: Dates would be confirmed early next year.
- 3) First Aid training: This was ongoing, with annual refreshers and 3-yearly requalification's.
- 4) Online training platform: Looking to migrate the British Safety Council training onto the council's new online learning system, called "ilearn".

The Sub-Committee considered the training update and asked questions to which responses were provided.

In response to a question raised as to whether the council produced any health and safety training for new businesses and start-ups, the Service Manager (Health and Safety) said there was information on the council's website and this was provided by the environmental health team, not corporate health and safety.

There being no decision required, the Sub-Committee **noted** the health and safety training update.

116. **Health and Safety Corporate Update including 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:

- Ongoing work continues with fire risk assessments, audits and informal visits giving advice.
- Occupational Health – Mini health checks
- NHS health checks
- Mental health awareness
- Overcoming social anxiety
- Atrial fibrillation testing
- 70 Flu vaccination vouchers issued to eligible staff via the NHS
- Organisational engagement sessions (four sessions: Reframing; PERMA-H; Balancing emotional needs; Resilience the science of recover
- Webinar on Menopause (October 2022)
- Get the best out of you (for home and work)
- Manager peer networking group

The Sub-Committee considered the verbal update and asked questions to which responses were provided.

In particular discussions were held on the menopause webinar and that men should also get involved in the training to gain knowledge.

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

117. 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) A company specialising in manufacturing canopies and ventilation ducting had been fined after an employee's hand was drawn into the rotating part of a machine, resulting in serious injury. An apprentice was being instructed by another apprentice and a trainee on to operate the machine. The employee suffered from a crushed fingertip and a fracture. As a result of the incident the worker was unable to work for two months.

The company had not performed a risk assessment for using the machine or implemented any safe systems of work including recognising that the gloves presented a drawing-in and entanglement hazard on the machine. Also, they did not provide staff with adequate training or assess the additional risks presented by a young, inexperienced person working with machinery and being unaware of existing or potential risks.

- 2) A spring manufacturing company had been fined after an employee had two fingers of his right hand severed whilst attempting to lubricate a bandsaw. The worker decided to replace the blade, as on inspection it appeared to be heavily worn. He attempted to lubricate the new blade, by pressing a cardboard tube of wax onto the exposed section of it whilst it was running.

Although the worker had received training from the supervisor in using the machine, it was of poor quality, no formal competency assessment had been carried out, nor was he certain that he could use the machine unsupervised. Also, despite lubrication of the blades in this manner being standard practice within the company, it was unnecessary as the machine was self-lubricating.

This incident could have been avoided. Employees should ensure they carry out an assessment of the risks and put in place safe systems of work for the operation of all machinery.

The company was fined £200,000 and ordered to pay costs of £5,394.

- 3) A sea food processing company was fined after a worker died following injuries sustained when she was run over by a forklift. A joint investigation by the Health and Safety Executive and Police Scotland found that no site-specific workplace transport risk assessment had been carried out. It was found the company had failed to implement effective arrangements for the management of health and safety and also failed to act on the advice of a health and safety consultant several years prior to the incident.

The company was fined £80,000 under Section 2(1) and Section 33(1)(a) of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974.

The Service Manager (Health and Safety) explained that all of the cases detailed could have occurred in any organisation, including local authorities. In all three cases, the same four issues were missing, being the lack of:

- Information
- Training
- Instruction
- Supervision

118. **Dates of future meetings**

The Sub-Committee **noted** the date(s) for future meetings, as listed below. All dates were Mondays starting at 4pm and would be held as indicated:

- 13 February 2023 via MS Teams

The meeting concluded at 5.28pm

Signed by:

Chair
