

MINUTES OF THE SAFETY COMMITTEE HELD ON

25 January 2024

2.00 - 3.07 pm

PRESENT

Committee Members

Norah Nolan (Chair)
Donna Beechener
Jackie Davies
John Harty
Graham Jarvis
Wendy Makepeace
Scott Merry
Kim Taylor
Stuart Moseley
Katie Seymour
Natasha Terrell

Officers

Hannah Marriott, Governance Support Officer
Grace Ngochinya, Governance Support Officer

106. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Rory Davies and Gemma Maxwell.

107. MINUTES OF LAST MEETING HELD ON 12 OCTOBER 2023

RESOLVED that the minutes be agreed and signed as a correct record.

108. MATTERS ARISING - ACTIONS COMPLETED

Katie Seymour, Senior HR Assistant, confirmed that the lone worker training had been completed.

It was confirmed that Contact Harlow had received updated fire safety training following its relocation to the third floor. Kim Taylor, Contact Harlow Manager, confirmed that on the ground floor the security officers and duty managers would be used as co-ordinators. Kim Taylor also confirmed that all Contact Harlow staff had been trained as fire marshalls.

109. **HEALTH AND SAFETY UPDATE**

a) Accident/Aggressive Incidents/Security

Jackie Davies, Health and Safety Officer, said that there were no accident trends or RIDDOR incidents to report.

Kim Taylor advised that, from October to December, there were 20 recorded incidents of aggressive behaviour. Kim Taylor advised the Committee that legal letters had been sent to two repeat offenders and their behaviors had improved dramatically. Kim Taylor said that there had been one serious incident in January where the Police were called and the offender was found to be carrying a knife in their bag. Kim Taylor confirmed that they have re-looked at their risk assessments which includes there always being more than one member of staff on reception. It was noted that staff also find the screens important for security purposes.

The Committee discussed how the layout of the reception area does not help with reducing aggressive behaviour e.g. it is too big and uninviting. It was noted that Rebecca Farrant was carrying out an accommodation review and that the reception area would be looked at as part of this. Norah Nolan, Assistant Director - Environment, agreed to discuss the review with Rebecca Farrant and Kim Taylor and provide an update at the next committee meeting.

b) Health and Safety Review Inspections

Jackie Davies confirmed that the reviews for the Playhouse, Pets Corner and the Civic Centre/Stewards had been completed and were all positive. Health and Safety Officers would schedule the review for Parndon Wood Nature Reserve next and then aim to visit all other areas by the end of the year, separating into individual teams.

c) Lone Home Workers

Natasha Terrell, Assistant Director - Governance, HR and Legal, advised that the hybrid working policy would be sent out to all staff today. The policy included advice on lone home working and had been agreed by the Wider Leadership Team.

d) Covid Update

Norah Nolan advised that there were no longer any formal rules or regulations for Covid. It was confirmed that there was no requirement for officers to test for Covid and it would be down to each manager to risk assess their local area. The Committee did,

however, agree that it would still be sensible for officers to work from home, where possible, if they have tested positive for Covid.

The purchasing of any test kits is to be managed and funded locally by the specific team as/if required.

Kim Taylor raised concerns over staff who were “off sick” and can’t work from home. Natasha Terrell confirmed that HR can support with any issues like this.

e) First Aiders

Jackie Davies confirmed that the Civic Centre had adequate first aid trained officers, however, it was noted that they are not always working in the building.

It was advised that the default first aiders should be the Stewards or Contact Harlow Officers, located on the third and ground floors. It was also noted that all of the security officers were first aid trained. It was suggested that comms should be arranged to confirm the first point of contact for first aid. Jackie Davies also suggested that the first aid qualification should not automatically be renewed for all officers, and a review will be carried out to assess if further re-certification is necessary within that role/team.

Katie Seymour suggested that a one-day emergency first aid training course could be offered to more staff as required and if deemed necessary.

f) Health Surveillance/Screening

Graham Jarvis, Senior Environmental Health Officer, advised that the Council arranges for the Harlow Occupational Health Service to offer a number of services including screening, vaccinations and training. Norah Nolan confirmed that there would be a review on the corporate need for these services as this hadn’t been reviewed since Covid.

g) Standing Item Reminder (Links into Team RA's/Training Matrix)

Jackie Davies noted that this was a standing item reminder.

The Committee discussed the training matrix and agreed that it wouldn’t be necessary for officers who are just required to complete i-trent training. Natasha Terrell advised that, in due course, the Council may look at a new training system which would cover the recording of both HR and Health and Safety training.

110. **STATUTORY TESTING POLICIES - HOUSING (SET ITEM)**

Wendy Makepeace, Assistant Director – Housing and Property, advised that she would circulate an update after the meeting.

111. **FIRE SAFETY UPDATE - HOUSING (SET ITEM)**

Wendy Makepeace advised that there would be a report going to Cabinet in February 2024 on the demolition of three blocks at Sycamore Field following fire safety advice received. Wendy Makepeace confirmed that a task and finish group had been set up and was meeting every three weeks.

112. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

Scott Merry, Facilities Manager – Civic Centre, advised that the smoke vents in the Civic Centre were being replaced this week. Scott Merry advised that the accommodation works on the third floor were still being looked at and a specification for the works would be put together. Scott Merry also confirmed that there would be redecoration works throughout the building before the end of the year.

John Harty, Facilities Manager – Harlow Playhouse, confirmed that the Playhouse had seen improved results on the water hygiene since December.

Donna Beechener, Assistant Director – Revenues and Benefits, advised that she had attended the lone worker training and noted that it was very helpful. Following the training, her team had started to use the Life360 tracker to monitor and support lone working.

Natasha Terrell advised that there was a Disability Action Panel meeting arranged for February at the Civic Centre. It was confirmed that the hearing loop in the Chamber would be fixed and assurances that areas would be accessible for all attending.

113. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

25 April 2024 – 10am

11 July 2024 – 2pm

17 October 2024 – 2pm

CHAIR OF THE COMMITTEE