

**MINUTES OF THE SAFETY COMMITTEE  
HELD ON**

25 April 2024

10.00 - 10.57 am

**PRESENT**

**Committee Members**

Norah Nolan (Chair)  
Jackie Davies  
John Harty  
Wendy Makepeace  
Scott Merry  
Kim Taylor  
Stuart Moseley  
Bob Purton  
Natasha Terrell

**Officers**

Grace Ngochinya

114. **APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR**

**RESOLVED** that Norah Nolan be elected to Chair this meeting.

115. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Donna Beechener, Rory Davies, Graham Jarvis and Katie Seymour.

116. **MINUTES OF LAST MEETING HELD ON 25 JANUARY 2024**

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

117. **MATTERS ARISING - ACTIONS COMPLETED**

Norah Nolan, Environmental Health Manager, advised that the health and safety review inspection and documentation for Parndon Wood Nature Reserve had been completed and that the process went really well.

Jackie Davies, Health and Safety Officer, confirmed that a recent review of the first aid assessment had been carried out, taking into consideration hybrid working patterns, as discussed at previous committee meetings. The Committee noted that selected Contact Harlow advisors, (on the ground and third floor), and most Stewards are first aid trained. The first aiders list, in kitchens on every floor, are kept up to date. The Committee also noted that there would be a copy of the first aid needs assessment

available on Kaonet. It was confirmed that first aid at the Latton Bush Centre was also fully covered.

Natasha Terrell, Assistant Director – Governance, HR and Legal, confirmed that the disability panel meeting had taken place and noted that the alternative ground floor location worked well. Natasha Terrell informed this will be reviewed again after election on 2 May.

118. **HEALTH AND SAFETY UPDATE**

a) Accident / Aggressive Incidents / Security

Norah Nolan confirmed that she would be meeting, Rebecca Farrant and Kim Taylor to further discuss the security aspects in terms of the Council, and use of the open ground floor space. A meeting had been scheduled, however, hopefully by next committee there would be an update.

Kim Taylor reported 23 recorded incidents from January to March, however, staff and security had been able to diffuse anyone aggressive. Many of the offenders are known to the staff already. Homelessness incidents were mostly around self-harm with an increase in mental health related issues, drug and alcohol use. These had a direct effect on Contact Harlow staff and their mental health. Kim Taylor confirmed that she had created a guide and would provide training to her staff, especially around suicidal awareness. The online training had come through Essex Partnership programme and would start over the next couple weeks.

b) SSR - Staff Safety Register

Norah Nolan confirmed that this had been updated on Kaonet. The improved process had been administered by Jo Penney.

Bob Purton advised that there were some issues with HTS needing to follow process in relation to the staff safety register. He advised that there had been some incidents and some HTS staff were refusing to enter certain properties. Also there have been issues with some of the staff not supporting the process.

c) Health Surveillance - HOHS

Norah Nolan advised that there was a meeting with Occupational Health, Human Resources and Health and Safety. It was noted that the process had been due for review, following Covid and changes in working environments. Norah Nolan noted that corporate safety should be a priority for the Council and, despite some teams engaging with it again, not all have continued with this. The Committee noted that the Corporate Safety Team would produce a

document to discuss, and an update would be provided at the next committee meeting, following a further meeting to finalise the document once Natasha Terrell, Clare Seymour, Norah Nolan and Graham Jarvis have met.

It was noted that managers need to update and review their processes even if their teams are not as affected. Natasha Terrell reminded the committee of the importance of early warning signs. Consideration must be given to high-risk areas, such as Pets Corner, Parndon Wood Nature Reserve, Playhouse and Leah Manning Centre, due to the nature of the facility.

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

Jackie Davies noted that this was a standing item reminder.

Corporate risk assessments – ensure inclusion of any relevant COSHH data, health screening requirement. Health and safety should be a standing item in all team meetings and training matrix should be updated and reviewed regularly for all staff. Continue to report quarterly to H&S (committee) via [safety.officer@harlow.gov.uk](mailto:safety.officer@harlow.gov.uk)

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

Wendy Makepeace advised the Committee that this was her last meeting. She introduced Bob Purton, Housing Operations Manager – Property, who leads on compliance for housing and non-housing assets.

The Committee noted that there have been issues around compliance testing including deterioration of stock in terms of aging. Bob Purton advised that there are two separate tests for housing and non-housing, most of which are carried out by HTS. It was noted highest identified issues included poor hygiene and asbestos. Some lighting and water issues may need to be outsourced. Housing has taken to install smoke detectors in all council properties.

With regards to the gas and electric testing on the compliance report, there have been concerns around not gaining access. If the “no access procedure” has been exhausted, it will revert to Housing Operations team to potentially put this through to the courts to gain access. Bob said Compliance needs to be priority when it comes to budget, invoices sometimes are outstanding. The risks must be managed as certificates cannot be issued without all relevant checks being completed.

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

Wendy Makepeace confirmed that this was progressing well. The Committee noted that there was a new procedure at the Harlow Fire

Station which has an enforcement aspect to it, with two enforcements already being issued. Within a few housing blocks there were issues with various types of scooter being left in hallways, but ongoing communication with residents has meant that many of these issues have been addressed quickly. Some minor repairs have been completed and three of the flat blocks, (Edmunds Tower and Brenthall Tower), were having works undertaken including the installation of new fire doors.

With regard to Sycamore Field, the fire service was contacted and informed of the intended demolition of the flat block. The Committee noted that there might be more insight regarding the progress with the sales of the properties at its next meeting.

121. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

The Committee thanked Wendy Makepeace for her contribution to the committee and welcomed Bob Purton as her replacement.

It was agreed that the new Chair would speak to the Wider Leadership Team, (WLT), to ensure that all areas of the Council are represented in the meeting, as it was agreed that health and safety needs to be of high importance. Natasha requested for a list where the gaps are to take to WLT – Safety Team to produce a draft list for Natasha.

There are changes being made on the 3rd floor, especially to the toilets – both men’s and ladies’ toilets are to be expanded, with the removal of the showers. Scott Merry also states there are plans for creating a couple of showers downstairs on the ground floor. This is part of the green agenda and the cycle to work scheme to provide showers for staff – this is in the final stages before the works can commence. Currently looking at early July 2024 to start. Scott to bring an outline to next meeting.

122. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

Thursday 11 July 2024 – 2pm  
Thursday 17 October 2024 – 2pm  
Thursday 23 January 2025 – 2pm  
Thursday 24 April 2025 – 2pm

CHAIR OF THE COMMITTEE