



## **CORPORATE HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMITTEE**

### **MINUTES OF THE REMOTE MEETING HELD VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS ON MONDAY, 15TH NOVEMBER 2021 AT 10.00 A.M.**

PRESENT:

Councillors:

Councillor D. Havard (Chair)

M. A. Adams, P.J. Bevan, W. Williams

Councillor C. Gordon (Cabinet Member for Corporate Services)

Together with:

L. Donovan (Head of People Services), E. Townsend (Health and Safety Manager), A. Wigley (Principal Health and Safety Officer), D. Beecham (Electoral Services Manager), M. Williams (Interim Head of Property Services), R. Barrett (Committee Services Officer), and J. Lloyd (Committee Services Officer)

Trade Union Representatives: J. Garcia (UNISON) and G. Parr (UNITE)

#### **RECORDING AND VOTING ARRANGEMENTS**

The Chair reminded those present that the meeting was being filmed and would be available following the meeting via the Council's website – [Click Here to View](#). Members were advised that voting on decisions would take place via Microsoft Forms.

#### **1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors D.T. Hardacre, A.G Higgs, and S. Kent (Vice Chair), together with L. Dallimore (Unison), N. Funnell (GMB), R. Edmunds (Corporate Director of Education and Corporate Services), S. Richards (Head of Education Planning and Strategy), C. Edwards (Environmental Health Manager), and P. Cryer (Service Manager Children's Services).

Arising from the list of apologies provided, Members asked if the Officers who had given apologies had been asked to send a substitute in their place, and expressed the importance of full participation at these meetings. Miss Lynne Donovan (Head of People Services) confirmed that she was able to cover for Mr Richard Edmunds; however, she confirmed that she would raise the matter with Corporate Management Team and remind them of the importance of Senior Officer attendance at the Corporate Health and Safety meetings on behalf of their respective Directorates and the need for Officers to send a relevant substitute if they cannot attend.

## **2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest received at the commencement or during the course of the meeting.

## **3. MINUTES – 21ST JUNE 2021**

It was moved and seconded that the minutes of the Corporate Health and Safety Committee held on 21st June 2021 be approved as a correct record and by way of Microsoft Forms this was unanimously agreed.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Corporate Health and Safety Committee held on 21st June 2021 be approved as a correct record.

## **REPORTS OF OFFICERS**

Consideration was given to the following reports.

## **4. HEALTH AND SAFETY OVERVIEW – PRESENTATION**

Mrs Emma Townsend (Health and Safety Manager) gave a presentation to the Committee which reflected on the work of the Council's Health and Safety Team and the position going forward.

Members were referred to the challenges faced by the Team and the demands on workloads as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. The Team continue to respond to routine and non-routine demands. Members were advised that 18 months into the pandemic, Covid still remains a significant health and safety pressure and the Health and Safety Team are facing more challenges as the workplace controls may be different to those in the community. The team is also dealing with numerous risk assessments in line with guidance from Welsh Government and a heavy workload in relation to schools, as the health and safety guidance in relation to Covid is frequently changing.

Members were advised that staff training is ongoing but remains either physically distanced or online. The Health and Safety Team are ensuring that day to day health and safety issues are met. Members were referred to recent health and safety checks which included the inspection of 33 pavilions, highways, civic amenity sites and Tiryberth Depot. A procedure is also in place to record outstanding health and safety tasks. Members were advised of other ongoing work in Health and Safety, including targeted HSE dust inspections and visits to all schools.

Members were informed that new ways were being utilised to deliver Health and Safety training and that a training video is to be produced to support and communicate the updated Accident Reporting and Investigation Policy, which will include information on retaining evidence whilst investigations are ongoing and learning lessons and information sharing. Members were advised that Health and Safety forms part of ongoing Senior Management conversations across all Directorates and ensuring that Health and Safety is considered at an early stage and is integral to decision making across the Authority. It was emphasised that the success of managing Health and Safety depends on everyone across CCBC playing their part. In conclusion, it was emphasised that whilst the Council is heading in the right direction, some considerable challenges around the pandemic still remain.

A Member noted that the attendees at a recent Remembrance Day service had not been able to properly socially distance due to the Covid testing centre in the same area. Officers explained that such events can be mitigated by measures such as the use of face coverings but acknowledged the myriad of challenges in mitigating such risks.

A Member referred to an area of highway in his ward which was covered by overgrown brambles and was affecting residents' ability to walk on the pavement, who were thereby having to walk on part of a busy highway to pass this area. The Member was invited to contact the Health and Safety Manager outside of the Committee meeting so that this matter could be investigated and passed onto the appropriate department or relevant body.

A Trade Union representative requested an update on the testing of air quality in schools and corporate buildings. Members were advised that the CO2 monitors were being supplied by Welsh Government but nothing had been received as of yet. Members were also referred to the HSE and WG guidance on air quality that is reflected in the most recent schools' risk assessments and in the corporate risk assessment.

The Health and Safety Manager was thanked for her presentation and the Chair acknowledged the ongoing work of the Health and Safety team, despite the pressures of Covid.

Following consideration of the presentation the Committee noted its contents.

## **5. HEALTH AND SAFETY ACTION PLAN UPDATE**

The Health and Safety Manager provided Members with an update on the Health and Safety Action Plan and informed Members of any matters that could impact on the management of Health and Safety within the Council. Members were advised that the action plan for the Health and Safety Division allows resources to be prioritised to those areas considered to be an organisational risk. The Committee were updated with regards to the priorities of the Health and Safety Division and the impact of Covid-19 on meeting these objectives.

The Committee were referred to the core workload of the Health and Safety team and they noted the day- to-day activities undertaken. Members were also referred to work that needed to be revisited and work that needed to be progressed. Members were advised that it was also the intention to develop a new plan for 2022-24, which will set out Directorate priorities. Officers suggested that the 2022-24 action plan could be referred to a future meeting of the Corporate Health and Safety Committee and to continue to monitor this against the existing action plan.

Following consideration of the report the Committee noted its contents.

## **6. ASBESTOS AND FIRE UPDATE – PRESENTATION**

The Health and Safety Manager gave a presentation to the Committee which updated Members on Asbestos and Fire Safety. Members were referred to the impact of Covid on the work programme. Members were advised of the difficulties faced by the Health and Safety team in relation to asbestos and fire safety and the reluctance of premises managers to allow access into their buildings during the pandemic.

Members were advised that both Fire Officer Posts within the authority are now core funded for 4 days a week, and are prioritised to determine where they are best required within the Authority. Sleeping risk remains a high priority with all fire risk assessments on residential care homes being completed. Members were advised that work is due to progress on sheltered schemes and flats and that South Wales Fire and Rescue Service visited several

schools over the summer, with the intention that the authority's Fire Officers will re-visit these schools to monitor actions and progress.

Members were advised that all building managers are required to complete an annual fire risk assessment review, which forms part of the Statutory Maintenance Group Monitoring. The Committee were also referred to the increased demand for the Fire Officers to comment on plans and proposals and as a result an additional Fire Officer post has been agreed on a temporary basis for 2 days a week to support the existing Fire Officers.

Members were provided with information on asbestos management, in particular the successful removal of asbestos contained materials from school sites within the county borough. Members were advised of the development of an introduction to duty to manage asbestos training programme which would commence with Head Teachers in schools and then be rolled out to all premises managers. Asbestos condition monitoring will be relaunched with annual monitoring to form part of Statutory Maintenance Group monitoring.

A Member sought clarification on the part-time nature of the Fire Officer posts and it was noted that the current Fire Officers do not work on Fridays. Members were advised that there is a very limited market in terms of competence and experience and so these posts are usually filled by ex-Fire Service Officers, who are very experienced, but as they are retired they do not wish to work a 5-day week. Members were advised that if the post specified a full week or had to include a Friday, it may be difficult to recruit. During the course of discussion, Members also discussed the importance of meaningful fire drills and the need to ensure that these are undertaken on a regular basis.

Following consideration of the presentation the Committee noted its contents.

## **7-8. INFORMATION ITEMS**

The Committee noted the contents of the following information reports which had not been called forward for discussion at the meeting. Full details were included in the Officer's reports.

1. Recent Health and Safety Executive Updates.
2. Accident Statistics Report for April 2021 – September 2021.

The meeting closed at 11.00 am.

Approved as a correct record and subject to any amendments or corrections agreed and recorded in the minutes of the meeting held on 14th February 2022, they were signed by the Chair.

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CHAIR