

MINUTES OF THE HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMITTEE

Thursday 23 May 2024 at 5pm

PRESENT: Councillor Cunningham, Councillor Best, Councillor Webley-Brown, Councillor Atkinson

IN ATTENDANCE, VIRTUALLY: Councillor Lahai-Taylor

Also present: Rich Clarke (Head of Assurance), Marta Makowska (Corporate Health and Safety Manager)

Apologies: Councillor Bell

1. Election of Chair and Vice Chair

Councillor Cunningham was elected as Chair of the Committee.

Councillor Best was elected as Vice-Chair of the Committee.

2. Minutes

The Minutes were agreed as an accurate record.

As a matter arising, Councillor Best requested that a comprehensive list of defibrillators are reported.

The Lead Officer agreed to gather a list from inspection records and circulate it outside of the meeting.

3. Declarations of Interest

No interests were declared.

4. Corporate Health and Safety

The Head of Assurance, the lead officer, presented the report which outlined the Council's Defibrillator Policy, matters from previous meetings and relevant incident statistics.

4.1. The Defibrillator policy was approved by EMT. The policy sets out to support services who decide to acquire a defibrillator in making sure it receives adequate ongoing maintenance, taking into consideration concerns from the committee that devices should be in custody of people who are prepared to maintain and ensure proper use.

4.2. Members commented on British Heart Foundation campaign that is encouraging more people to learn how to do CPR. They mentioned that it is important for companies to link to first aid training with employees' skills.

- 4.3. Councillor Best expressed that it was disappointing that the next review would be in a years time, as this was not frequent enough. She also mentioned that it should be in corporate policy that each directorate has access to defibrillator and that this was as important a fire evacuation policy.
- 4.4. The HOA stated that the issue is not acquisition cost, but rather the resource of weekly checks to ensure device is in good order. Will discuss with colleague further.
- 4.5. On emergency evacuations, the HOA said that the Council continue with the revised approach to emergency evacuations across the Catford Complex following last year's unplanned events. So far there have been good levels of compliance with evacuations completed quickly and in good order. A review of all Council sites evacuation arrangements as part of routine health and safety inspections was included.
- 4.6. He seeks to consolidate the approach into a written procedure, spread out to other sites beyond the Catford Complex.
- 4.7. On matters raised at the Corporate Health and Safety board, the report outlines a list of sites visited where health and safety checks were carried out. None of the issues identified posed direct and immediate threat to staff or service users. Typical issues included the need to clear areas of obstructions, carry out and document testing of safety equipment and ensuring adequate signage and instruction. It is expected that remedial issues are to be resolved by the time of the next quarterly inspection. For issues left unresolved, we would escalate these first to relevant Heads of Service in most cases, but potentially more urgent escalation for issues of greater concern.
- 4.8. Councillor Lahai-Taylor stated that it was alarming that two of the places which did not have working fire drills were children's centres. The officer confirmed that after inspections, it is expected that there should be an evacuation. He stated he will follow up with members on the escalation of the inspections that did not result in an evacuation.
- 4.9. Following completion of the 2022/23 health and safety audit cycle, have been reviewing conclusions and considering how we organise and resource expert staff to support colleagues in meeting health and safety responsibilities. A proposal to regularise disparate resource across the Council into an organised structure based on risk is being worked on. This is likely to lead to additional recruits to help deliver health and safety support.
- 4.10. Q3 and Q4 incident data was outlined in report. There were some significant changes in reported incidents in schools. The officer is working with colleagues to find out why there appears to be a decline and what is driving it and will report back to members later in the year.

- 4.11. Councillor Best asked if would damp and mould in housing be considered an “incident” where, for example, a resident had been hospitalised for respiratory issues caused by mould. The Officer clarified that the Committee is looking at incidents that affect employees, or service users who are in public areas.
- 4.12. Councillor Webley-Brown said that variation of what is considered an incident is important to differentiate and the way organisations report the incident will impact how it is reported. She asked if there was a template that is followed for reporting. The officer responded that there is a standard template that is to be used which allows the data to be thoroughly scrutinised.
- 4.13. RIDDOR incidents were also outlined in the report. The Officer stated that the aim was to centralise reporting to the HSE so that there is more consistency and investigative information about the incidents. This change has been ongoing since January.
- 4.14. The Chair picked up on the rise in assault numbers. The Officer responded that these incidents are discussed in great detail, and tend to come from passenger transport issues. The quantitative and qualitative data will help further discussions and make an improvement.
- 4.15. The Chair also asked what the council will to do about pavements where residents often trip and fall on unstable pavements. The Officer responded that he would liaise with colleagues in insurance about these incidents, and will report back. As the incidents are not taking place on council premises it may not a matter for this Committee.

The report was noted.

5. Future meetings

The committee agreed to 6pm start for future meetings. The Chair agreed will liaise with the Governance team to proceed with this change.