

**The Highland Council
Joint Consultation Group's Central Safety Committee**

Minutes of Meeting of the Joint Consultation Group's Central Safety Committee held in Council Headquarters, Glenurquhart Road, Inverness on Friday, 19 September 2008 at 12.15 p.m.

Present

Employer's Representatives:

Mrs C A Wilson
Mr M Rattray

Mr J Finnie
Mr J Ford

Staff Side Representatives:

Mr G Reynolds, GMB
Mr T McCarthy, UNITE

Mr S Burroughs, UNISON

Officials in attendance:

Ms M Morris, Assistant Chief Executive
Mr A Williams, Health and Safety Manager, Chief Executive's Service
Ms E Barrie, Personnel Manager, Chief Executive's Service
Ms C Christie, Employee Development Manager, Chief Executive's Service
Mr M Halley, Fire Safety Management Officer, Housing and Property Service
Mr B Cameron, Corporate Manager (Ross, Skye & Lochaber)
Mr I Burnett, Representative of City of Inverness Health & Safety Group
Dr N Lindsay, Representative of Sutherland & Easter Ross Area Health & Safety Working Group
Mr J Sneddon, Representative of Lochaber Health and Safety Working Group
Mr C Stein, GMB (observer)
Mr A MacInnes, Administrative Assistant, Chief Executive's Service

1. Chairman and Vice Chairman

In terms of the Constitution, following an election of councillors, and annually thereafter, the Committee was required to appoint from amongst their members a Chairman and Vice Chairman. If the Chairman appointed was one of the Employer's representatives, the Vice-Chairman was required to be one of the Staff Side representatives and vice versa.

In this respect, nominations for the appointment of Chairman were invited.

Mr G Reynolds, being the only person nominated, was duly **APPOINTED**.

Thereafter, nominations for the appointment of Vice-Chairman were sought.

Mrs C A Wilson, being the only person nominated, was duly **APPOINTED**.

2. **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Mr A Henderson from the Employer's Side and Mr A Wemyss from the Staff Side.

3. **Minutes of Last Meeting**

There had been circulated for confirmation the Minutes of the last meeting of the Committee held on 27 June, 2008 - the terms of which were **AGREED**.

4. **Minutes of Area Health and Safety Groups**

There had been circulated for information the following Minutes of Area Health and Safety Groups:-

- i Lochaber Health and Safety Working Group - 28 May, 2008,
- ii Nairn & Badenoch & Strathspey Joint Health & Safety Working Group -19 June, 2008;
- iii Ross & Cromarty Health and Safety Working Group - 28 August, 2008);
- iv Caithness Health and Safety Working Group - 20 May, 2008;
- v City of Inverness Health and Safety Working Group - 13 August, 2008; and
- vi Sutherland & Easter Ross Area Health and Safety Consultation Group - 18 September, 2008

The Committee **NOTED** the terms of the minutes.

Arising from the minutes the following matters were raised:

- i City of Inverness Minute – (item 12) – “Incident with Cyclist” – It was advised that there had been an incident whereby a member of staff was very nearly run over by a cyclist while exiting the Town House. There were also problems with vehicles turning in the street and mounting the pavement.

It was **NOTED** that this matter had been addressed and a safety barrier was to be installed outside the entrance to the Town House. The barrier should be in place in the next few weeks.

- ii City of Inverness Minute (Item 15) 1 – 3 Church Street, Inverness – (Planning & Building Control Offices) – **AGREED** that the Assistant Chief Executive should liaise with the Inverness City Manager to address the health and safety issues at these offices, which had

been raised previously by the City of Inverness Health and Safety Group at their meeting held on 13 August, 2008;

- iii Drummuie Office Accommodation – **NOTED** that while a number of health and safety issues had now been addressed at Drummuie offices since the last meeting of the Committee, there were still areas of concern. In this respect, the Corporate Manager (Caithness, Sutherland & Easter Ross) had resurrected the Drummuie Project management Group to address these concerns. In particular, the Committee asked that this Group address the issue of there being no Responsible Premises Officer (RPO) on site at Drummuie. There should also be a Depute RPO on site.
- iv **NOTED** that the Assistant Chief Executive undertook to raise with the Director of Housing and Property concerns by the Committee that RPO's were not being kept informed by Services of actions affecting the premises they were responsible for. Producing a list of RPO's in all Council buildings and their responsibilities would also be discussed with the Director of Housing and Property.

5. Fire Extinguisher Training

There had been circulated Report No. CSC/8/08 dated 8 September, 2008 by the Head of Personnel which outlined proposals for the delivery of fire extinguisher training to groups of key staff within the Council.

Members were advised that the Fire Safety (Scotland) Act 2005 and the Fire Safety (Scotland) Regulations 2006 required employers to provide fire fighting equipment in workplaces and train staff in its safe use. Employers were expected to determine the number of staff to be trained in the use of fire extinguishers. Based on an assessment of risk, the Fire Safety Management Officer had recommended a number of groups to be determined as 'key staff' for training purposes. The report detailed the training delivery and costs associated with training 'key staff'. It was recommended that the training was rolled out over a three year period with follow up refresher training every three years.

In view of the potential cost, it was proposed that alternative training options would be looked at and the most appropriate and best value option would be progressed through formal tendering if necessary. In this respect, it was suggested that in-house training should be one of the options to be considered.

By way of clarification, the Fire Safety Management Officer advised that in the event of the discovery of a fire, employees should sound the fire alarm and evacuate the premises. Only if it was felt safe to do so should employees tackle the fire using fire extinguishers. In this respect, it was suggested that all employees should be reminded of this advice.

Thereafter the Committee:

- i **APPROVED** the proposed arrangements for the delivery of fire extinguisher training to key staff within the Council;
- ii **AGREED** that the option of providing fire extinguisher training in-house to 'key staff' should be explored; and
- iii **AGREED** that all employees should be reminded of the procedures to be followed in the event of the discovery of a fire.

6. Update on Current Health and Safety Issues

There was circulated Report No. CSC/9/08 dated 3 September, 2008 by the Head of Personnel providing an update on several current health and safety issues and developments.

During a summary of the report information was provided on:-

- i Policy – It was advised that the revised Health and Safety Consultation Policy and Guidance notes had been posted on the Council's Health and Safety Intranet. The Council Policy on the safe use of Display Screen Equipment had been updated (to incorporate the recent change to the employer contribution towards the supply of glasses) and was now available on the Health and Safety Intranet site.

It was also advised that nominations had been received from Services for representatives to attend a cross-service working group to develop a policy on the Management of Occupational Road Risk. Trade Unions would also be represented on the group.

- ii Lotland Street Depot – following the last meeting of the Committee, the depot had been visited by the Housing and Property Service, Property Risk Management Officer and an action plan had been developed in conjunction with TEC Services management to address a range of issues. A Site visit for the Committee to the depot had also been arranged following this meeting.

- iii Drummuie Council Offices – a number of the health and safety concerns at these offices, raised at the last meeting, had now been addressed, although there were still areas of concern. The Drummuie Project Management Group had been resurrected to address these concerns. The Committee re-enforced the need to address these concerns as soon as possible.

It was also advised that a fire risk assessment had been carried out on the premises. Fire safety training had also been delivered to those staff identified by their employing Services to carry out the role of wardens.

- iv Moving and Handling Co-ordinator - it was advised that no applications had been received for the first advertisement of this post. The post had been re-advertised.
- v Trade Union Safety Representatives – a new Health and Safety Partnership Agreement and a revised Charter had been drafted. The Staff Side were encouraged to promote the on-line Display Screen Equipment Training to their members and via the network of Safety Representatives.

Thereafter, the Committee **NOTED** the updated information on health and safety issues and developments contained in the report.

7. **Health and Safety Partnership Agreement and Safety Representatives Charter**

There had been circulated Report No. CSC/10/08 dated 3 September, 2008 by the Head of Personnel which proposed the adoption of a revised Health and Safety Partnership Agreement with the recognised Trade Unions and an updated version of the Safety Representatives Charter.

In discussion, reference was made to TEC Services and Housing and Property having their own health and safety functions. It was advised that work was in progress for a corporate approach to health and safety arrangements across all Services. It was also confirmed that in future a representative from TEC Services should attend meetings of this Committee.

Thereafter, the Committee:

- i **APPROVED** the draft Partnership Agreement and Safety Representatives Charter attached as appendices to the report, subject to a further period of consultation which ends on 17 October, 2008;
- ii **AGREED** that a progress report should be submitted to the next meeting on proposals for a corporate approach to health and safety arrangements across all Services of the Council; and
- iii **AGREED** that a representative of TEC Services should attend meetings of the Central Safety Committee in future.

8. **Date of Next Meeting**

It was **NOTED** that the next meeting of the Central Safety Committee would be held on Friday, 12 December, 2008.

The meeting ended at 1.15p.m.