

# STAFF COMMITTEE

**MONDAY, 21 SEPTEMBER 2020 - 4.30 PM**



**PRESENT:** Councillor K French (Chairman), Councillor Mrs M Davis (Vice-Chairman), Councillor C Boden, Councillor M Cornwell, Councillor Mrs J French, Councillor S Tierney and Councillor Wicks

**APOLOGIES:** Councillor F Yeulett

**OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:** Sam Anthony (Head of HR and OD), Carol Pilson (Corporate Director and Monitoring Officer), David Vincent (Health, Safety & Emergency Planning Manager) and Kathy Woodward (Internal Audit Manager)

## **S1/20      APPOINTMENT OF THE CHAIRMAN FOR THE MUNICIPAL YEAR**

It was proposed by Councillor Boden, seconded by Councillor Tierney and resolved that Councillor Miss French be elected as Chairman of the Staff Committee for the Municipal Year.

## **S2/20      APPOINTMENT OF A VICE-CHAIRMAN FOR THE MUNICIPAL YEAR**

It was proposed by Councillor Mrs French, seconded by Councillor Boden and resolved that Councillor Mrs Davis be elected as Vice-Chairman of the Staff Committee for the Municipal Year.

## **S3/20      PREVIOUS MINUTES**

The public minutes of the meeting of 20 November 2019 were agreed.

## **S4/20      CORPORATE HEALTH & SAFETY ANNUAL REPORT 2019/20**

Members considered the Corporate Annual Health & Safety Report 2019/20 presented by David Vincent.

Members made comments, asked questions and received responses as follows:

- Councillor Cornwell commented that 148 lost working days due to accident, highlighted at 3.4 of the report, was quite high in comparison to the previous two years and asked if most of these related to slips and trips. If so, what sort of accident would fall under this criterion; it had not been a bad winter so he would not expect them to be ice-related for example. David Vincent said that the majority of slips and trips generally related to the Refuse and Cleansing Service, where operatives may have tripped on a pavement or road surface or caused by dips in the grass when collecting bins, or potholes. In respect of manual handling, there would have been a period of time off work to recover from ligament damage for example, when moving bins or bin bags. However, we follow up on each example and put in counter measures where we can. Councillor Cornwell thanked David Vincent.
- Councillor Boden referred to the Accident Totals by Service at 3.2 of the report and asked how many of the previous year's figures for the Communities, Environment, Leisure & Planning Team included Leisure, which is no longer our responsibility. David Vincent advised that he did not have that information to hand but leisure workplace accidents, as opposed to sporting injuries which are not included in this data, had always been very low; 90% of the figures would

relate to the Refuse and Cleansing Service within that Team. However, he would be willing to provide a breakdown of this data is required and Councillor Boden said that would be useful.

- Councillor Boden asked if it would be possible to have more information on the two RIDDOR reportable incidents whilst appreciating the need to respect confidentiality. He asked if these were reportable only because they each involved an absence of more than seven days or was it because they involved broken bones. David Vincent advised that these were reportable purely because of the absence of seven days and not due to fractures. One was a manual handling injury caused when putting sacks in the back of a vehicle and the other was due to a slip on a wet grass surface. Again, all incidents are followed up to see where any risk can be reduced but he agreed to provide further detail in future reports and added that a Code of Practice had been introduced on slips and trips to reinforce the need to assess the risk in that area.
- Councillor Boden said that near misses are important, and he would be interested to know how many near miss reports there were in comparison to previous years and asked if staff do report these. David Vincent said that this is something that the council has tried hard to promote; the same form is available for reporting accidents and near misses and staff are encouraged to report near misses to help identify where there are issues. Councillor Boden thanked David Vincent.
- Councillor Mrs Davis said she presumed that manual handling training was part of a rolling programme and asked how often staff were retrained. David Vincent explained that refresher training is provided usually every three years. He advised that there is a blended approach which involves not only the corporate training, but also the provision of further aides such as Toolbox Talks, as used additionally by the Refuse and Cleansing Service, and a variety of e-learning courses. Councillor Davis thanked David Vincent.
- Councillor Wicks said that the working environments at Fenland Hall and the Base are so different with the majority of staff at the Base more used to a manual handling environment and asked how often a workplace audit is undertaken at Fenland Hall. David Vincent advised that all services go through a detailed audit programme every two years; he undertakes all assessments on higher risk areas, with evidence submitted by managers for lower risk areas. This is all supported by sample checks and ad hoc inspections. However, certain assessments such as display screen risk assessments should be reviewed yearly or a new assessment undertaken whenever a member of staff changes workstation or moves office. Councillor Wicks thanked David Vincent.
- Councillor Mrs Davis asked how COVID-19 has affected us with these assessments when so many employees are working from home. David Vincent advised that this has been the key part of work this year and in relation to all our buildings we have followed all Government guidance in relation to making them COVID-secure. We have put in place all relevant signage in respect of the 2-metre rule and put up protective screens where necessary, with hand sanitisers etc. provided and the implementation of cleansing stations at various points throughout the buildings. Additionally, all offices and meeting rooms have been reviewed for maximum capacity and these are clearly marked out. All staff working from home have had to complete home working risk assessments in conjunction with their line manager, who then submits completed forms to the HR team. He added that whilst staff are working from home, that is their workplace and health and safety legislation still applies. Councillor Mrs Davis thanked David Vincent.

**The Staff Committee noted the Corporate Annual Health & Safety Report 2019/20.**

*(David Vincent left the meeting at the end of this item).*

**S5/20      CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES**

The confidential minutes of the meeting of 20 November 2019 were agreed.

**S6/20**

**CONFIDENTIAL ITEM - INTERNAL AUDIT REVIEW**

Members considered the confidential Internal Audit Review report presented by Sam Anthony.

Members made comments, asked questions and received responses.

**Staff Committee APPROVED the proposals as outlined in the confidential report.**

*(Kathy Woodward was present to answer any questions on this item but left the meeting before discussion commenced).*

5.19 pm

Chairman