

AD-HOC SCRUTINY PANEL

A meeting of the Ad-Hoc Scrutiny Panel was held on Tuesday 3 November 2020.

PRESENT: Councillors J Thompson (Chair), D Coupe, C Dodds, T Higgins, J Hobson, J McTigue, M Saunders, M Storey and S Dean

PRESENT BY INVITATION: Councillors

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

OFFICERS: S Bonner and C Lunn

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE: Councillors D Rooney

20/1 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest received at this point in the meeting.

20/2 **MINUTES- AD HOC SCRUTINY PANEL - 10 OCTOBER 2018**

The minutes of the Ad Hoc Scrutiny Panel meeting held on 10 October 2018 were submitted and approved as a correct record.

20/3 **INTRODUCTION - MIDDLESBROUGH COUNCIL'S HEALTH AND SAFETY PROVISION**

The Council's Health and Safety Manager, Head of Strategy, Information and Governance, Director of Legal and Governance Services and Operational Manager (Built Asset) were in attendance at the meeting to provide Members with a general overview of how Health and Safety was delivered.

The Health and Safety Manager provided information regarding the Council's Health and Safety Management System (HSMS) via a presentation to the panel, which covered the following topics:

- Aims and Objectives of the presentation;
- Introduction (including details of the Health and Safety Manager's role, tasks undertaken since October 2017, and progress achieved to date);
- HSG 65 (managing for Health and Safety, which encompassed the 'Plan, Do, Check, Act' approach);
- Premises Health and Safety Plans;
- Fire Risk Assessments;
- Service Area Health and Safety Plans;
- Auditing Procedure; and
- Digitalisation of the HSMS.

Following the presentation, Members were afforded the opportunity to ask questions of the invited officers. The following issues were raised:

- A Member commended the officers for the work undertaken in preparing a comprehensive Health and Safety plan, and felt that once it had been digitalised it would be both easier to access and help to improve traceability.
- A Member made reference to the Transporter Bridge. It was queried whether the current closure was due to a Health and Safety issue, and whether or not it would be

repaired. In response, the Health and Safety Manager advised that following concerns being raised by Trade Union representatives, an inspection had been carried out and a report produced. As a consequence of the respective report, precautionary measures were taken to close the bridge; an update from the Council's Environment and Commercial Services directorate would be provided in due course. The Director of Legal and Governance Services explained that, in response to the Transport Bridge report, advice had been sought from an external consultant regarding required remedial works to the Bridge. The outcome of this would be reported to the Executive on 24 November 2020. On a separate note, it was explained that the report had also identified some governance issues; it was proposed that these would be referred to the Corporate Affairs and Audit Committee in December, with appropriate follow-up action then being undertaken.

- A Member referred to Middlesbrough House and the Civic Centre and advised that some concerns had been raised. It was queried what risk assessment activity had been undertaken in relation to these buildings, and what issues had been identified. In response, the Operational Manager (Built Asset) indicated that he was not aware of any concerns being raised with Middlesbrough House; however, if any issues were presented, they would be investigated and addressed as required. Regarding the Civic Centre, the age of the building was acknowledged, and explained that plans relating to this were currently under review. The panel was apprised of the work undertaken from a Corporate Landlord's perspective, which included every building being subjected to a condition survey on a five-year cycle to identify any potential condition items. In addition, an annual planned preventative maintenance programme to address statutory maintenance was also undertaken, which was supported by a responsive maintenance service. With those three elements of maintenance in place, it was endeavoured that any Health and Safety issues relating to the building fabric, or the planting equipment within the building, would be addressed.
- A Member made reference to the Council's Health and Safety responsibilities and queried whether policies applied to properties that the Council owned and rented out, with mention being made of the use of some buildings for social care purposes. In response, the Health and Safety Manager explained that if a building had Middlesbrough Council staff within it, the Health and Safety team would visit and provide a Health and Safety plan, the requirements of which would need to be implemented. There was a slight difference in terms of rented buildings, which were dependent upon tenancy agreements in place. It was indicated that for certain social care buildings, which included some houses, the team did inspect them; a comprehensive list of auditable Middlesbrough Council buildings was held.
- A Member referred to the Civic Centre and existing plans to move staff out of the building and into alternative premises. In response to an enquiry regarding the current position, the Operational Manager (Built Asset) explained that this would need to be referred to LMT for a position statement response, as it was outside of the Corporate Landlord perspective. This would be actioned.

The Chair thanked the officers for their attendance and contributions to the meeting.

AGREED:

1. That a current position statement in respect of the Civic Centre be requested from LMT; and
2. That the information, as provided, be noted.

20/4

ANY OTHER URGENT ITEMS WHICH IN THE OPINION OF THE CHAIR, MAY BE CONSIDERED.

None.

