Minutes of the Health & Safety Assurance Committee be held on Monday 23rd February 2016 at 10.00 am in the Principal's Meeting Room.

Present: Ms Chris Shoukry (Chair), Mr Gurpreet Dehal, Mr Mark Newlands (via conference call) Mr Simon Whitehead, Mr Gerry O’Hagan

In attendance: Professor Paul Layzell, Mr Simon Higman, Professor Paul Hogg, Professor Bob O’Keefe, Professor Katie Normington, Mr Matt Purcell,

Apologies: None

Minutes: Hilary Baker

1. MINUTES

QUESTIONED minute number 15/122 which was not clear:

Action: to consider how risk should be notified to the committee in terms of an absolute risk or a magnified risk due to being outside the timescale with an assessment of any consequential, compounding impact should an incident occur.

It was noted that this referred to when a risk identified in an audit had not been addressed and as a consequence the risk became higher and if an incident occurred there could be a further impact on the college. The Committee was concerned that these outstanding audit items needed to be reported to the Committee and that there should not be a delay with this. Therefore it was important to ensure that the number of times the Committee met during a year was appropriate.

Noted that this would be addressed in the agenda item under Committee Effectiveness Review.

Subject to the amendment the minutes were approved.

2. MEMBERSHIP AND TERMS OF REFERENCE

Mr Simon Whitehead from Proctor and Gamble was welcomed to the Committee.

3. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

3.1 Update on training for major incidents.

Noted that although it was still intended that training should be undertaken during the current academic year, the current plan was being re-written to ensure that the roles and terms used in the plan aligned more closely with those used by the emergency services. It was intended that the new plan would be submitted to Planning & Resources Committee in April and that training would take place soon after. It was confirmed that there had been training on the current plan and the importance of ensuring core staff were trained in the plan was noted.
4. MANAGEMENT OF CONTRACTORS ON CAMPUS

RECEIVED an update from the Director of Estates regarding health and safety of the two major projects: the Library and Student Services Centre and the infrastructure upgrade which impacted on activity around the campus and its boundaries. Health and safety activity on each project site reported to the Site Foreman then to the Senior Project Manager and Director of Estates with a link to the Director of Health & Safety when issues needed to be escalated. Health & safety was a standing agenda item at Estates Project Delivery Group.

It was recognised that the larger projects were less likely to generate a health and safety incident due to nature of the site and the contractors. The projects involving smaller firms as contractors were a higher risk. Steps were being taken to reduce this risk. Currently one independent individual provided health and safety advice on campus but it was intended to increase this presence by employing a consultancy who would have a larger footprint on campus. Discussions with possible consultancies were ongoing.

NOTED that there had been a change in the communication strategy to ensure that staff and students were aware of when activity would happen and how it would be managed. Information about work was communicated as two weekly snapshot of why work was being carried out so that people could understand how it would affect them.

NOTED that deliveries of large loads on campus were being managed well and there were no major concerns. However, despite the precautions taken especially during peak times when several large deliveries were being made and where banksman were used it was not possible to allow for the actions of individuals who did not follow instructions. The focus of communication would ensure that individuals were aware of increased activity in areas where they were effected and decrease the risk of accidents caused by individual’s behaviour. It was noted that efforts were being made to ensure that deliveries not connected to the building work were made to other parts of the campus to decrease congestion.

5. REPORT FROM THE HEALTH & SAFETY DIRECTOR

AGREED that it would be useful to have a regular agenda item about a particular issue or risk area where if appropriate a member of staff from that area could be invited to the meeting to provide a report to Committee.

AGREED that the Director of Estates or a representative from Estates should attend each meeting to provide an update. This should be in the early part of agenda.

RECEIVED the report from the Health & Safety Director.

5.1 Accident Statistics

NOTED the overview of accident statistics for the current academic year, there had been an increase in the number of accidents compared to the previous year however when looking at trends over the last 5-6 years this was not significant.
NOTED that 13 of the accidents reported had been in catering however catering always ensured that accidents were dealt with appropriately and followed up with risk assessments and training. There had been a health and safety audit of catering the previous year and there were no actions outstanding.

5.2 Reportable Accidents and Incidents

NOTED that there had been no reportable injuries so far this academic year. Specific incidents of note were summarised in Appendix 1.

NOTED that one incident of a chemical burn had highlighted an issue with identifying where training records were held when training had been carried out by the supplier of a product or an external trainer. Also whether training carried out on specialist equipment in a department was recorded centrally. This was being considered as part of the process review. The possibility of individuals being responsible for updating their own centrally held training records was raised.

DISCUSSED the benchmarking figures relating to the number of RIDDOR incidents across the sector. Royal Holloway seemed to be in line with the number of incidents across the sector. The Committee questioned whether there was a likelihood that incidents were under reported. It was confirmed that health & safety audits had highlighted that there could be under reporting, however this only included incidents of a minor nature. An electronic accident reporting system to make reporting easier was in the final stages of development.

5.3 Fire Alarm Activations

NOTED that cooking remained the main reason for fire alarm activations. Actions were being taken to remedy this. The College Fire Safety Officer was producing an information/instruction video for students at the beginning of the year. The film would be presented by students and filmed within halls to make it relevant to students. In addition the Fire Safety Officer would offer two training sessions per term to students. It was planned that these would be offered to students who were subject to disciplinary procedures for fire alarm offences as a way of reducing a fine or lessening the penalty. Details of these were still being considered.

NOTED the sector comparison of data for fire alarm activations.

RECEIVED the comparison of data with other universities with similar numbers of students and staff. Noted that Royal Holloway did not stand out in the sector although it might be helpful to look at what Derby University was doing as their number of activations was so low.

5.4 Health & Safety Audit

NOTED that the Director of Health & Safety was reviewing how progress reports on auditing could provide the necessary assurances that required actions are being progressed and the risks presented by outstanding actions presented.

The Committee questioned whether there were any major issues health & safety audits had raised and whether this posed a risk to the institution.

NOTED that departments were not meeting deadlines but were giving business reasons for this.
NOTED that a communication from the Principal was shortly to be sent out to Heads of Departments reminding them of their responsibilities under health and safety.

5.5 Inspection of Pressure Systems and Lifting Equipment

NOTED the report in Appendix 8 from the Compliance Manager. Some items which were out of use or were inaccessible remained outstanding but relevant departments were aware of these and they would be dealt with as soon as possible. Work was ongoing to ensure that statutory inspections were not allowed to get out of date in the future. Each department would be required to have one person who was aware of requirements and had responsibility for keeping records up to date. Departments would be notified in good time when testing was required and there would be an escalation process in place if testing was not carried out.

NOTED that ensuring new equipment was notified to the Health & Safety Department would be challenging as this could not be progressed through the procurement system. The Committee raised that asset registers could be source of information for this.

Revised Fire Alarm Testing Schedule

NOTED that a revised testing schedule had been introduced with high risk buildings continuing to be tested on a weekly basis, and lower risk every 2 weeks. Some building occupants were also able to carry out self-testing which meant they could choose a time which would cause the least disruption.

5.6 Compliance Monitor Site Inspections

NOTED site inspections had commenced. Work was ongoing about identifying the best way for issues to be reported. Imminent risks would be reported promptly to Maintenance Services for appropriate action.

5.7 New Sentencing Council Guidelines

NOTED that the new guidelines for sentencing for health and safety offence came into effect in February.

6. COMMITTEE EFFECTIVENESS REVIEW

DISCUSSED that the Health & Safety Committee was still a fairly new committee. It had been necessary for the Committee to ask for quite a lot of detail about issues that had been raised in order for them to be provided with the assurance they required. The Committee was still exploring ways in which it could be effective and identifying the information that it needed from the College. Although the terms of reference referred to policy it was agreed that this needed to be more explicit. It was noted that it would be helpful for the Committee to be provided with inventory of health & safety policies and more detail on the structure of health & safety and the relationships between the health & safety department, Estates, Campus Services and Academic Departments.

ACTION to refer the terms of reference and membership of the Committee at the next meeting.

ACTION a list of health & safety policies to be provided for the next meeting.
ACTION Committee to be provided with an overview of the structure of the health & department and the connections between the Health & Safety department, Estates, Campus Services and Academic Departments.  

AGREED that the committee should continue to meet three times per year.  

7. ZIKA VIRUS  

DISCUSSED the impact the Zika virus could have for the College.  

NOTED that the College had a policy for students and staff working overseas although this did not specifically refer to the Zika virus. The Secretary and Registrar would write to Heads of Departments highlighting the issues for students and staff travelling to sensitive areas.  

8. ANY OTHER BUSINESS  

NONE  

9. DATE OF NEXT MEETING  

8th June 2016 at 10.00  

SIGNED

Chris Shoukry  
Chair of health & Safety Committee  

DATE