

Health and Safety Committee Meeting

17 July 2026

Meeting Room 1 SHQ / Teams

Attendees: Barrie Ackerlay (BA), Calum Bell (CB), Graham Britten (GB, Chair), Dave Howlett (DH), Jason Manders (JM), Katie Nellist (KN), Laura Power (LP), Councillor Robin Stuchbury (RSt), Kieron Thomas (KT) and Dave Tubbs (DT).

Online: Marcus Hussey (MH), Stu Long (SL),

Meeting opened: 10am **Meeting closed:** 12.30pm

Item	Details	Action
1.	Introductions and welcome – GB welcomed KT who was standing in for OR.	
2.	Apologies: Aaron Brinklow (AB), Daniel Caldwell (DC), Jack Mills (JM), Oliver Reddick (OR) and Paul Scanes (PS)	
3.	Minutes from last meeting: Minutes of last meeting approved.	
4.	Matters Arising - Action Log Previous actions reviewed.	
5.	Property update – LP advised that this month's focus, had been on summer resilience, particularly heat management on stations. Strategic workstreams were being developed across premises security and contaminants. Security workstreams were beginning to identify gaps in CCTV, intruder alarm provision, remote monitoring and wider perimeter threat protection with on-call and day crewed stations presenting a high level of vulnerability. The Contaminants workstream continued to require close collaboration with Property, particularly regarding station zoning, welfare facilities, storage, laundry and cleaning arrangements, and potential layout changes. A key challenge was ensuring short-term work does not conflict with future service-wide requirements. An audit of the Property and Maintenance functions was scheduled for July. This would provide an opportunity to review risk controls, contract management, maintenance planning, budget visibility, compliance arrangements and the overall operating model. Additional issues identified include RTC compound areas at stations which do not currently provide sufficient protection to prevent public access and misadventure. This should be prioritised, particularly at stations without CCTV. Interim warning signage was also required. Solar panels across the	

	estate had not been covered by servicing contracts, presenting a maintenance and compliance risk. Health and safety training at supervisory level does not currently provide sufficient competence for signing off RAMS, monitoring changes to asbestos management plans, and overseeing contractor works. Greater collaboration between Property and Health & Safety teams was needed to maintain compliance. LP had experience with Martyn's Law, and it was best practice, regardless of the amount of people attending an event, and required a lot of integration with the estate in terms of having lockdown procedures and evacuation procedures. Further work would be needed to integrate it with event planning to formulate a deeper risk assessment. KT advised that there was opposition from the FBU on co-location of police within fire service premises because of the added risk to staff of being targeted because of the association with the police. KT felt that business continuity plans needed to be reviewed on the basis of extreme weather events, as the business continuity plan for Buckingham was to relocate to Winslow which was a smaller 'hotter' station. DT advised there was an action for a business continuity plan response wide, where historically it had been for each station which would assist with that. There would still be particular issues around extreme weather.	
6.	Sickness Absence Data – SL gave an update on Q1 workplace injury data. A main focus over the last few months was to re-establish the relationship between HR and the Health and Safety Team. There had been five workplace injuries that were reported across the Service. The incidents were low in frequency and predominantly minor in severity. There were four minor injuries and one moderate injury. Two resulted in sickness absence. One musculoskeletal injury that remained open in Q2 but had subsequently been closed. There were no significant emerging trends. A watch based instructor course with the primary focus on supervision training was being introduced and incorporated into the development pathway initially for supervisory managers, and then rolling out across different levels.	
7.	Health and Safety Audits – progress update – JM advised that following a 12-month period of gathering data, the revised risk-based audit programme had been fully implemented from April 2026. As a result, a full health and safety audit would no longer be undertaken at every site on an annual basis. Station Commanders were still required to complete a self-assessment within each financial year (1 April to 31 March). The 2026/27 audit schedule has been developed using the outcomes of previous Health	

	and Safety audits and included both DSEAR Risk Assessments and Fire Risk Assessments as part of the overall assurance process. Within one month of receiving a completed self-assessment, the Health and Safety Team would undertake sample checks of the DSEAR Risk Assessment, review the Fire Risk Assessment and complete the station audit. Where a self-assessment was not submitted by the agreed deadline, the station would automatically receive a red rating. In addition to previous audit outcomes, the risk-based approach would also take account of factors such as changes in Station Commander management, typically within 3 to 6 months of a new responsible person taking up the role and concerns identified through cause-based or targeted visits. The frequency of station audits would be based on the previous year's rating: • Red (2025/26): Audit visit during 2026/27. • Amber (2025/26): Audit visit during 2027/28, unless other risk factors trigger an earlier visit. • Green (2025/26): Audit visit during 2028/29, unless other risk factors trigger an earlier visit. There were no changes to audit participation, which would continue to include Health and Safety, the Station Commander, Property and an FBU representative. Where a responsible person had not received Fire Risk Assessment training, they must arrange this and, in the meantime, seek support from a competent person. During the period April to June, Health and Safety completed audits at: • Aylesbury - Red • Haddenham - Green The main themes identified through both fire risk assessments and station audits were general housekeeping standards and issues relating to RTC compound fencing.	
8.	Contaminants – update – DT advised that the Contaminants Group meetings were now taking place every 4 weeks, with expanded memberships to ensure all stakeholders were represented. The terms of reference had been updated. The Service had representation on the Southeast Contaminants Group to share good practice and learning. Also trying to establish Thames Valley meetings to align where possible. This was all being worked on in conjunction with the FBU Health and Safety representatives and anything requiring consultation would also be sighted to other TU safety representatives.	

	No further updates on the HSE Inspection. NFCC had released their personal decontamination package. This had been reviewed to see how it aligned with the Service's current procedures, equipment etc. There were plans to update the zoning signage for sites to make them more accessible with more detail and QR codes for staff to take them to the relevant additional information. Information and awareness had been focussed on operational staff, but it should be for all staff and all people that come onto the Service sites including the wider public. A contaminant landing page had been created on the intranet for all staff; all documents and relevant information would be on there. Zoning plans were in place for all stations and all sites would be looked at including workshops and headquarters. Previous considerations had been around frontline crews, but additional work had started to ensure attending officers were also considered. Personal decon packs previously only issued to FF and WC were now issued to SC and GCs. Plans had been developed to increase face fit testing requirements as required by the HSE. Two dedicated test kits were in use, and officers were working from a priority list of all staff depending on their last date of face fit testing. Funding was required for Bureau Veritas (BV) sampling to be carried out on sites, equipment and appliances. A business case for BV sampling and additional air monitoring units to be drafted between H&S, Technical and Property. This would be taken through all three delivery groups. There were concerns over plans for the Westcott site, ensuring current practices could be run with future proofing covered. The exposure form had been updated and would now be called a contaminant hazard record and would be used to record occasions where employees had worked in the presence of contaminant hazards during operational incidents or training. KT advised that the little bottles of shower gel provided to staff, had been leaking into welfare bags, dispensers in the shower would be better. There was a concern that on the form staff were not saying they were exposed when that was what the FBU wanted. Also, it should be expanded to all types of contaminants, hazmat and asbestos. Monitoring of how many traumatic incidents a member of staff had attended and offering additional support through mental health well-being. A laminate sheet in the green bags would be good on areas that people should concentrate on cleaning. DT advised that there would be a laminated sheet that comes out, with pictograms, flow charts about decon processes and noted the request around small bottles.	
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	KT asked about the small drinking water bottles on appliances, would it not be better for staff to have thermos type flasks as there were water machines on every station and to fill them up before they go on the appliance. There was the additional risk of the breakdown of plastics in the heat which was not good. DT advised that he would look into the water bottles, not only the impact on plastics, but also the environmental impacts of single use disposable plastic water bottles. There were some risks to issuing staff with water bottles, working routine and regularly washing them out.	
9.	Health and Safety KPIs progress report – JM advised that the target was to deliver Health and Safety toolbox talks to all teams over the five-year period from April 2025 to March 2030. To date, 135 employees had received a toolbox talk, and good progress was being made towards that objective. The target remained reviewing and signing off all risk assessments within 21 days of receipt. All risk assessments received during the period were reviewed and commented on within the required timescale. The target was to complete all Health and Safety site audits within the 2025/26 financial year, and this was successfully achieved. JM gave an overview of the Q1 Health and Safety performance indicators and safety event data. The injury rate continued to remain within target range. Overall, the figures indicate injury levels remained relatively low, and trends would continue to be monitored. During Q1, five workplace injuries were recorded. Whilst numbers remain relatively low, each incident was reviewed to identify learning opportunities and help prevent recurrence. There was one RIDDOR-reportable injury during the quarter. This was an over seven-day musculoskeletal injury involving a lower back injury sustained after a misplaced weighted step on uneven ground at an incident. This was still under investigation. There were no physical assaults on members of staff during Q1. There were three incidents of threatened violence reported during the quarter. There was a threatened violence reported late in June that was not showing on the graph. Two of these incidents happened on the incident ground. Whilst these did not escalate to physical violence, they still had an impact on staff and continue to be monitored and investigated where appropriate. There were five near miss reports during Q1, reporting of near misses remained extremely important as it allowed Health and Safety to identify hazards and implement controls before an injury or more serious event occurred.	

	Hazard reporting levels had remained encouraging, with 23 hazard reports submitted during Q1. The majority were still progressing through the process, with five currently open, eleven awaiting sign-off, one pending action and six fully closed. The majority of the hazard reports raised during the period related to temperatures. Vehicle incidents continued to represent one of the most significant sources of safety events. During Q1 there were nine vehicle collisions and three vehicle damage incidents recorded. Most incidents occurred during low-speed manoeuvring, and no incidents were attributed to third-party fault.	
10	South East Health and Safety and Peer Review Update – CB advised that the Peer Review was being held on 16, 17 and 18 November. DC was leading the work, dates, invites etc had all been sent out. A discussion had been raised around the timings of the HSE audits. The focus was on contamination and face fit testing but given they would be interviewing people, and planning station visits, they would not commit to what notice they would give. The HSE were currently undertaking a document review and had advised that from August onwards the Service should expect to see invitations or communications giving notice of intended visits.	
11.	Papers update – None	
12.	Proactive Safety: Hazard reports – JM advised that 23 hazard reports were submitted during Q1. Of these, six had been fully closed, five remained open, eleven were awaiting sign-off and one was awaiting completion of actions. The recurring themes raised during the period related to temperatures and conditions associated with the GEX drill tower. This would continue to be monitored.	
13.	Reactive Safety – During Q1 24 safety events were recorded. These included three vehicle damage events, nine vehicle collisions, five personal injuries across various employee groups, one property damage event, five near misses and three threatened violence incidents. There were no injuries involving members of the public, no officer injuries and no incidents of actual violence reported during the period. Breaking down the safety events by activity type, routine activities accounted for the highest number of events with seven recorded. Operational driving accounted for four events, operational fire activity for two, and manoeuvring at incidents one. Training activities collectively accounted for three events. This showed that, whilst operational activity	

	remained a factor, a significant proportion of incidents continued to occur during routine day-to-day activities. Of the nine driving collisions recorded, all were classified as either minor or moderate, with no major incidents reported. Seven of the nine incidents occurred during slow-speed manoeuvring. Four incidents occurred whilst operating on blue lights and five occurred during normal driving conditions. The data continued to highlight low-speed manoeuvring as the key area where preventative action and awareness should be focused. Looking at event trends, vehicle incidents remain predominantly low-severity, with eleven classified as minor and one as moderate. Importantly, none of the nine driving collisions were attributed to third-party fault, and one-third identified ill judgement as an underlying cause. There was one RIDDOR-reportable injury during the quarter involving a lower back injury sustained at an incident. The five near misses reported consisted of three minor and two moderate events. The two moderate near misses involved an air-conditioning unit plugged into an extension lead which subsequently melted into the socket, and a BA mask where a broken chinagraph was discovered within the breathing port behind the non-return valve. Looking at overall severity, 18 of the 24 safety events were classified as minor, six were moderate, and no events were classified as major. This indicated that the majority of reported incidents continue to be lower-severity events, whilst still providing valuable learning opportunities. There was currently one L2 investigation overdue.	
14.	Safety Representatives – update – KT advised there was really good work being done with the decon project, and he was seeing a massive change which needed to be promoted. As the CFO had announced, the Bicester Motion incident was no longer a criminal case for the police, it was now with the HSE, who could still prosecute through the CPS. KT wanted his disappointment noted on the Service’s approach to LGBT and Pride events. The FBU would be fully supporting Pride MK in September. The FBU were fully supportive of the new command support project that RBFRS were leading on.	
15.	Safety event costings: JM advised that looking at the financial impact of safety events during Quarter 1, the total cost was £17,543.24, made up of	

	£16,540.24 in vehicle-related costs and £1,003 in property-related costs. The vast majority of vehicle costs arose from a single reversing incident. The current repair estimate was £16,089.53. The remaining vehicle incidents were comparatively minor, damage to a front step costing £281.45, damage to an RTC locker costing £122.50 and a pheasant strike costing £35. Property costs totalled £1,003 and related to an incident at GEX where gym equipment struck a window within the old bay door, resulting in both panes needing replacing.	
16.	Insurance: MH advised there were four claims closed during the period. The Service was at fault with three, and one the third party did not make a claim. One related to Aylesbury Fire Station, where the appliance reversed into a wall, one was a claim for a collision with a parked unattended vehicle (the third party did not claim). Also, there was a collision with private property and another collision with a parked/unattended vehicle. All minor incidents but come at a cost to the Service of just under £6k and a cost to the insurers of around £6k. There was only one new additional open case that related to a vehicle accident. There were five personal injury claims, and one additional claim officers were working on with the insurers. All open claims were being worked on by the insurers.	
17.	Legionella: LP advised that when reviewing the Service's position in terms of the water testing, temperature checks etc., the Water Management document that was currently in place was not sufficiently detailed as it should be and needed to include a section on deep lift pits to ensure that although there was an operational procedure to support this, it acts as the corporate position above that. LP asked if it needed to come through this committee for approval, or through one of the delivery groups and then up to SLT. CB advised that the deep lift pits needed to be included in the water strategy and the Legionella piece because of the risk. GB would be happy for it to go through the Finance and Assets Delivery Group as this Committee only met quarterly. GB asked if it could be circulated to all members of this group (including OR).	
18.	Asbestos Training - LP advised that she was also looking at what the training situation was for facilities officers. There were some elements that were missing, including working with asbestos. There was evidence of either intentionally or accidentally the potential to disturb asbestos containing materials on station, and whilst operational staff had asbestos training in terms of response, but there was nothing specific to the buildings they occupy. LP would like all staff to do asbestos awareness training.	

	CB advised they were looking for the Committee to approve a recommendation to mandate asbestos awareness training which was currently on the system for all staff. It needed some work before it was publicised. LP would meet with CB to go through some of the work she had been doing on controlling contractors, but also around the way the team notify contractors of some of the issues around site, whether it was asbestos, zoning etc., so there was actually confirmation they had been through the process or had the training. GB advised that once this was complete it should be taken to the People Delivery Group to get it endorsed as a mandatory package.	
19.	Any other business: GB advised that following the last leadership day where there was a discussion around the internal governance review and one question was raised to what extent does the Health and Safety Committee contribute; there was not sufficient awareness around the organisation about what the Health and Safety Committee actually does. CB advised a draft questionnaire had been prepared and would go to all members of the leadership group, with the purpose of looking at what this group does, what it could do differently, recognising what it does well and what it could do to improve and where it had been identified it could do some more work.	
20.	Date of next meeting: Friday 16 October 2026	