Reference	BOT21.JULY.04
Date	Thursday, 22 July 2021

RTPI
Royal Town Planning Institute

Board of Trustees

Health and Safety Report

Report from the Chief Operating Officer

STANDING ITEM

The Board of Trustees is asked to note and approve the contents of the Health and Safety Report including the following recently updated points: 4.1, 4.2, 5.6, 5.7, 5.8, 6.4, 7.1, 7.2 and 7.3.

1 Summary

1.1 The purpose of this report is to inform the Board of Trustees of Health and Safety matters across the institute including at all offices, arrangements for remote workers and volunteer activity. It forms part of regular Health and Safety reporting to the Board of Trustees as the first standing agenda item. Any urgent health and safety issues will be reported to Trustees outside of meetings as appropriate.

1.2 The institute's Health and Safety Policy is reviewed and amended in accordance with changes to legislation or when relevant changes to processes and infrastructure take place. It is subject to a formal review and approval by the Board of Trustees whenever changes are made or as a minimum every year. The policy was last reviewed and approved by Trustees in May 2021.

2 Trustee Responsibilities

2.1 RTPI Trustees are responsible for leading the commitment to Health and Safety across the institute. The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) define the following essential principles for organisational Boards:

Strong and active leadership from the top

- a visible, active commitment from the board;
- establishing effective 'downward' communication systems and management structures;
- integration of good health and safety management with business decisions.

Worker involvement

- engaging the workforce in the promotion and achievement of safe and healthy conditions;
- effective 'upward' communication;
- providing high quality training.

Assessment and review

- identifying and managing health and safety risks;
- accessing (and following) competent advice;
- monitoring, reporting and reviewing performance.

2.2 Everyone in the RTPI is responsible for their own safety and the safety of others who may be affected by their actions. However, under section 37 of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 individual trustees can be held liable if a Health and Safety offence is committed with the consent or connivance of, or is attributable to any neglect on the part of, any director, manager, secretary or other similar officer of the organisation.

3 Health and Safety and the Senior Executive Team (SET)

3.1 The Chief Executive and members of SET have overall responsibility for Health and Safety at the RTPI ensuring it is an integral part of the institute's business plan and activities.

3.2 Health and Safety is the first standing item on the agenda for all weekly SET meetings.

3.3 Health and Safety is also the first standing item at weekly 'All Staff' meetings. It is an opportunity to raise colleague's awareness of Health and Safety responsibilities, like the importance of accident and near miss reporting. It provides an additional opportunity for colleagues to raise any concerns they may have on Health and safety matters.

3.4 The RTPI has a Staff Committee. The committee, is made up of representatives nominated and elected from all areas of the institute and Health and Safety is one of the standing agenda items for this committee.

3.5 In 2018 a staff engagement survey was started. It includes a question relating to Health and Safety to provide an additional opportunity for feedback. In 2020, 78% (2019 – 78%) of colleagues agreed or strongly agree that Health and Safety provisions at work are good. The survey providers advise that this score is the third highest out of 20 organisations that ask the same question in their surveys.

4 The RTPI Health and Safety Policy

4.1 The institute's Health and Safety Policy was last revised in May 2021, presented to the Board of Trustees on May 26th (BOT21.MAY.05) and approved. The policy is updated whenever required. Changes to working practices, internal organisation, RTPI personnel, office facilities, legislation or other RTPI policies are examples of events that would initiate a Health and Safety Policy update. All updates require Board of Trustee approval.

4.2 The policy was circulated to all RTPI colleagues and updated on the intranet. All new RTPI colleagues receive a copy of the Health and Safety Policy together with a copy of the HSE booklet 'Health and Safety Law – What You Need to Know' in their inductions and staff will receive a periodic reminder.

4.3 The Covid-19 health emergency has led to temporary changes in work practices in order to comply with new regulations and laws. There is still uncertainty over the longer term implications for changes in work practices. An update on current practice is recorded in an appendix to this report. The institute's Health and Safety Policy has been updated appropriately.

5 Botolph Lane Systems and Maintenance

5.1 The fire detection system at the Botolph Lane office was updated in 2017 when a new control panel, visual flashing light alarms in the toilets and wireless alarm detectors were installed.

5.2 The access control system for Botolph Lane was also upgraded in 2017. New swipe cards were issued. A procedure where all visitors to Botolph Lane must be collected from the reception area by a colleague if access to an office area is required was introduced. New paperless signing in software and hardware has been introduced making it easier to account for colleagues and visitors in the event of an emergency or evacuation. This system is now accessibly through a contactless mobile phone app.

5.3 In 2020 work was started to modernise the Botolph Lane office access monitoring system. Additional cameras have been installed and existing equipment updated for improved image capture. Improvements like 24-hour remote monitoring via a mobile app, and better data storage have been implemented. This will improve the safety of colleagues working in the building when the reception is closed and support office services to ensure the office is secure.

5.4 In May 2019 the Board of Trustees approved renovation work on the toilet facilities throughout Botolph Lane to rectify safety issues highlighted through accident reporting, improve hygiene and maintain availability of facilities through reduced maintenance. At the same time a new office was created to ensure the IT team had an adequate working area.

5.5 The Board of Trustees will considered a paper in the last board meeting regarding proposed maintenance work at the RTPI London Office to ensure that a safe and healthy environment is provided for colleagues when the office re-opens after the COVID pandemic.

5.6 A full building condition survey took place on 2nd June 2021 and the results will be considered as part of a specification for future work on the building. The full report can be found in the Appendix to paper under agenda item 09

5.7 There have been occasions when water has leaked from the roof to the 4th floor during periods of heavy rain. These leaks occurred when the building was closed for all but essential access during the pandemic and it has become clear following the building survey that the repairs are not sufficient and a complete overhaul of the roof is required. The Senior Executive Team have immediately taken the decision to close the 4th floor until the roof is fully repaired because of the risk that leaks in the roof might disturb the asbestos that was reported to be present. Colleagues' swipe cards no longer allow access to this part of the building without permission from Office Services.

5.8 Subject to Government advice, Botolph Lane will open for a maximum of 12 colleagues for three days per week from 26th July 2021. Access to meeting rooms will be limited and colleagues will be expected to continue with social distancing, wear masks while moving around the building and a one way system will be in place in the stairwells. Access to the building on the other two days will be limited to allow for essential maintenance and contractor access.

6 Accidents and Incidents

6.1 There have been no RIDDOR (Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013) accidents or incidents reported since the last Health and Safety report to the Trustees.

6.2 There have been no near-miss reported since the last Health and Safety report to the Trustees.

6.3 There have been no accidents reported since the last Health and Safety report to the Trustees.

6.4 One accident has been reported since the last Health and Safety report to the Trustees.

Date	Location	Summary	Action
05/05/21	Botolph Lane	A lift engineer was completing maintenance work when he caught his hand in the lift door.	The engineer confirmed that he did not require medical assistance. The lift is out of use until further maintenance work is completed.

7 Training

7.1 Online Health and Safety training is part of the induction process for all new colleagues and includes fire safety, Display, Screen Equipment (DSE) safety and risk assessment and manual handling if appropriate. All colleagues complete annual DSE on-line training and this has continued and now includes feedback from home working environments. A new e-learning system will be launched in July which provides both 'bite-sized' and in-depth training covering a range of topics including health and safety, data protection and cyber security. Colleagues will be required to set aside a small amount of time month to complete this training.

7.2 The HSE recommendation for first aid provision within offices with 25 – 50 employees is at least one first-aider trained in Emergency First Aid at Work (EFAW). The institute currently has a number of EFAW qualified staff and training is taking place for designated individuals to ensure appropriate first aid provision in Botolph Lane when it re-opens.

7.3 There are trained fire marshals at Botolph Lane, employed by Keil Centre at the Edinburgh Office and employed by Centre Management at the Cardiff Office. Appropriate briefings will be provided before the offices re-open.

8 Wellbeing and Mental Health

8.1 Arrangements are in place to support the well-being of colleagues. A free and confidential telephone and web site advice and support service provided by Health Assured is made available to all colleagues and they are reminded about its availability. Regular advice notes provided by Health Assured are circulated to all colleagues and helpful information and signposting can be found on the Wellbeing Hub on the intranet.

8.2 Colleagues and their line managers are reminded about the need to achieve the right work-life balance. Flexibility around working hours is encouraged. Weekend working is discouraged except in exceptional circumstances and time off in lieu offered where weekend working is necessary.

8.3 The staff committee is a further forum for colleagues to raise concerns and recommend new ways of working that support wellbeing across the institute. All staff away-days', including the virtual away day in November have had a focus on wellbeing including sessions on mindfulness and managing an appropriate work life balance.

8.4 Specific measures were adopted to support colleagues during the pandemic lock down and whilst access to RTPI offices has been restricted. These are covered in an appendix to this report.

9 Fire Safety

9.1 When offices were open fire alarms are usually tested weekly. Testing has taken place fortnightly in Botolph Lane during the pandemic.

9.2 Emergency evacuation drills take place in all RTPI offices at least on an annual basis. These have been suspended due to office closures in the pandemic. Details of the last emergency evacuation drills at RTPI Offices are listed below:

Office	Date
London - Botolph Lane	04/10/2019
Edinburgh - Atholl Crescent	19/12/2019
Cardiff – Creative Quarter Cardiff	22/11/2019
RTPI - Civic Centre Swinton	26/11/2019

Emergency evacuation drills will resume when offices reopen.

10 Health and Safety Audit and Fire Risk Assessment

10.1 In April 2018 an independent 'deep dive' Health and Safety Audit and a Fire Risk Assessment was carried out on Botolph Lane by independent consultancy 'Safety for Work'. A number of urgent actions were recommended and these were all completed.

10.2 The same auditors repeated this audit in May 2019. A number of recommendations were made but with one exception, all observations were recorded as 'satisfactory' with no action required. A further audit was due to take place in 2020 but has been delayed due to the office closure.

10.3 An independent Fire Risk Assessment was conducted by Capital Fire under the 2005 Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order in March 2019 on the Botolph Lane office. The assessment concluded the potential consequence of fire was at the lowest level, 'slight harm'. The likelihood of fire was 'medium' ("normal fire hazards for type of occupancy with fire hazard generally subject to appropriate controls"). As a consequence, the risk to life from fire on the premises was assessed as 'tolerable' and no further actions or controls were recommended. A further audit was due to take place in 2020 but has been delayed due to the office closure.

10.4 A full audit covering health and safety, fire safety and legionella risk will take place on 2nd July 2021.

11 Support for the Regions

10.5 Under the new volunteering strategy activity has started to support the work of colleagues and volunteers in regions. The focus has been the implications for Health and Safety of using third party venues for meetings and events. A risk assessment-reporting tool for venues is now in use by regional teams. Arrangements have been agreed for lone worker reporting procedures to support regional coordinators working outside of normal office hours.

10.6 The risk assessment reporting tool for venues is currently being updated to include measures to ensure that venues are COVID safe once RTPI in-person events are re-introduced.

12 Support for Members

12.1 Health and Safety advice for members involved in activity on behalf of the Institute appears in the current Volunteers Handbook guidance like this: *"Volunteers should take reasonable care when travelling to and from volunteering duties, particularly if travelling in the early morning or late evening. Volunteers whose role involves aspects of "lone working" e.g. visiting sites to conduct surveys, should take reasonable care of their own personal safety, act in a professional manner at all times and ensure that site owners are given reasonable notice of their visit in advance".*

12.2 There is advice on insurance in the Volunteers Handbook and all members attending meetings on behalf of the institute are classed as 'insured persons' having the same insurance cover as employees.

12.3 A new risk assessment form has been introduced for members traveling abroad on institute business, with or without an officer. This includes the need to confirm the status of FCO advice for the country being visited and the arrangements with any local partner.

13 Resource Implications

Improvements to building, systems and reporting will result from feedback from all audit activity, accident reporting or colleague observations. Expenditure should be within current operational budgets but there may be unbudgeted costs. Where there are Health and Safety issues that are not in the general budget, the SET will make a request to Trustees for reserves funding.

14 Communications Implications

Internal communication regarding Health and Safety will continue through all channels.

15 Governance and Compliance Implications

This report outlines how RTPI is complying with current Health and Safety legislation, more particularly, the Health and Safety at Work Act (1974). Legislation is regularly reviewed and changes addressed.

16 Equality and Inclusion Implications

There are no equality and inclusion implications.

17 Corporate Strategy – Climate Action

The commitment to Climate Action activity will not be taken if there are detrimental implications for Health and Safety.

18 Corporate Strategy - GROWPLAN

There are no GROWPLAN implications.

19 Corporate Strategy – Digital Transformation

Digital Transformation is being used to improve Health and Safety and eliminate risks.

Appendix A: The Covid-19 Pandemic and Health and Safety

On February 28th 2020 the RTPI Business Continuity Team met to consider the implications to the health and safety of colleagues and volunteers from the growing threat of Covid-19. At the time there were less than 2,500 deaths reported globally, none in the UK where there were less than twenty confirmed cases. The Business Continuity team recommended the adoption of the policy of 'an abundance of caution' for health and safety and business continuity activity. It recommended the formation of a GOLD team, meeting daily, to make decisions and recommended an immediate suspension of volunteer travel. The Chief Executive agreed these recommendations and later the same day the first travel suspensions were implemented.

Over the following weeks the GOLD team acted to propose further restrictions of travel for colleagues and volunteers, the suspension of events activity, additional sanitisation and cleaning of work spaces and a request to the trustees for additional IT equipment to allow all colleagues to work from home.

On March 17th one week before the announcement of the first nationwide 'lockdown' every RTPI office was closed to all but a 'skeleton' staff. Colleagues successfully started to work from home. With the exception of physical events all the institute's normal activity has been delivered and maintained throughout the pandemic. The GOLD Team, chaired by the Chief Executive, has continued to meet throughout the pandemic, initially daily and now once at the start of every week.

The scale of change and need to respond quickly to new restrictions meant it was not possible to conduct the usual health and safety work place audits for home workers. Over time, DSE assessments were completed and additional equipment has been purchased and sent to colleagues who have needed it. Colleagues already assessed for specialist seating have been provided with chairs of similar specifications to those in the office. Support continues for colleagues who need equipment.

Despite this activity the working conditions for most colleagues have been less than ideal compared to the office environment. In acknowledgement of this and the need to protect the health and wellbeing of colleagues, SET agreed to offer reduced working hours to ensure colleagues could take adequate time away from workstations mitigating some health and safety risks. This also supported colleagues who had homes-schooling responsibilities during the first national lockdown. Although this support was suspended during the summer of 2020 when restrictions were lifted it was reintroduced to support parents home-schooling children at the start of 2021 and remained in place until schools returned in March.

Colleagues have received other support to limit the effects on their health and safety of the social isolation restrictions and home working. Monthly all-staff meetings were made weekly and are recorded for colleagues unable to make them. These meetings include a 'team of the week' through which colleagues have been able to get to know each other much more than ever before. Weekly departmental meetings and weekly one to one meetings take place. The Chief Executive holds a weekly 'drop in' meeting and Directors 'drop in' on departmental meetings. The Chief Executive's weekly email to all colleagues is now a more accessible 'vlog'. Colleagues report that virtual working has increased communication and team working.

A considerable implication of the change in working practice has been the impact on the mental wellbeing of colleagues coming to terms with the change in working practices, anxiety about the risks from Covid-19 both for themselves and their families and having to contend with family pressures like the need for home-schooling. Support for colleagues has been available from line managers and regular useful bulletins on well-being from the HR team. Two all-staff surveys have been conducted to collect feedback on further actions that can be implemented to support them. A new mental health and wellbeing hub has been set up on the 'share-point' staff intranet. Colleagues are encouraged to think about the implications of working on their own mental wellbeing by talking about issues and raising concerns. The importance of taking quality time away from work during the day is a key emphasis for all managers and colleagues are all encouraged to take advantage of outdoor exercise as one of the flexible benefits of home working.

The GOLD team had considered the implications for office access on a number of occasions and agreed on each to maintain the closure and the restrictions on colleagues using public transport. In this time IT colleagues have visited Botolph Lane to maintain systems and to use the time to make upgrades particularly to enhance security. The London, Edinburgh and Cardiff offices all open for one day a week for a small group of colleagues who have volunteered to collect mail, meet the conditions of our insurers, allow contractor access and to conduct walk round checks. Colleagues have avoided the use of public transport when visiting offices and the costs of making alternative arrangements are met by the institute.

In light of the latest published pathways to removing restrictions colleagues have been informed that the institutes offices will not be opened until after June 21st. It now looks likely that there will be some transmission of the Covid virus for an extended period and longer term precautions will be required. Risk assessments have been taking place to take into account the need to ensure all office facilities meet new Health and Safety Executive much higher standards for minimising the risks of virus transmission. Clean air quality, surface sanitisation, and social distance spaces are key criteria for these risk assessments. The outputs of these risk assessments and the implications for health and safety will be presented to Trustees in May.

The move to a new remote working model has supported an evaluation of new working models for many businesses used to an office only operation. There have been undoubted productivity and well-being gains resulting from reduced time spend commuting. Technology has proved to be equal or better as a solution to virtual meetings. There have also been less positive impacts on collaborative working, on-boarding and for some colleagues without suitable working space or facilities at home. SET are considering the appropriate future model based on the feedback from colleagues. In line with most organisations this is likely to involve colleagues spending significantly less time in an RTPI office in future and more digitally enabled meetings across the entire organisation to support inclusivity, efficiency and the delivery of net zero by the 2025 target with opportunities for collaboration and engagement time built into a resilient and productive business operating model in future.