

Health and Safety Executive Board Minutes		HSE/07/M02	
Meeting Date:	7 February 2007	FOI Status:	Fully Open
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Exemptions:			

## HEALTH AND SAFETY EXECUTIVE

### Minutes of the HSE Board meeting held on Wednesday 7 February in the Hope Room and by video link to Redgrave Court, Bootle

#### Present

Geoffrey Podger	Justin McCracken	Jonathan Rees	Alex Brett-Holt
Sandra Caldwell	Colin Douglas	Giles Denham	Vivienne Dews
Patrick McDonald	Eddie Morland	Kevin Myers	Mike Weightman
Jane Willis			

#### Also attending

Bill Gunnyeon (DWP) and Steve Dennis (whole meeting)  
 Gaynor Coldrick and Patricia Williams (by video conference) for item 2  
 Gaynor Coldrick, Sukhi Ghataore and Terri Griffiths (from NOP) and Lynn Delaney  
 and Tim Beaumont (by video conference) for item 3  
 Sarabjit Purewal for items 4 and 5  
 Andrew Cottam and Elaine Harbour (by video conference) for item 6  
 Len Creswell (by video conference) for item 7  
 Tony Bandle for item 8

#### Minutes

Peter Buckley

- 1 Minutes of the HSE Board held on 10 January and the Action Points**
  - 1.1 The minutes of the last meeting were agreed without amendment.
- 2 Agenda Item 2 - Finance and staffing – current position - (Paper B/07/14 closed)**
  - 2.1 Vivienne Dews, Steve Dennis and Gaynor Coldrick introduced the paper with the following remarks:
    - a. It was essential that Major Budget Holders continued to monitor delivery against the December forecast and to get in touch with PEFD quickly if deviation from forecast became apparent;
    - b. For the Board paper in March, it was important for Directors to provide PEFD with a brief assessment of how they were managing the impact of the post reductions through prioritisation and improved efficiency and how any remaining or emerging consequences were affecting outputs or quality, with specific examples where possible;
    - c. A Board paper in March would also report on progress against the affordable staffing plans of directorates and divisions and consider any adjustments to budgets for 2007\8;
    - d. From the January outturns, pay was £120k above the affordable staffing plan - largely due to staff leaving slightly later than predicted. The total spend above the affordable staffing plan on pay was now just under £200k which was included in the

December forecast and HSE's expenditure limit. Staff numbers were likely to come back on plan at the HSE level as colleagues taking early retirement left in February and March;

- e. The spend on Travel and Subsistence was lower than forecast so the financial management of this budget was still under control;
- f. The overall position on the December outturn was £1.5 million below forecast due to credible delayed spend;
- g. PEFD was continuing to collate contingency plans to deliver the December forecast but if Board members wished to make suggestions these should be sent to PEFD in the next weeks copied to other Board members;
- h. On presentation, the information contained in the paper would be passed on to the Trade Unions immediately after the Board meeting. The Board were appreciative of the support from the Trade Unions in managing HSE's financial situation.
- i. Finally, a summary of the current financial and staffing situation would be provided in the Board summary for e-express next Monday.

2.2 The Board then went on to discuss the paper during which the following comments were made:

- a. When assessing progress against the affordable staffing plans it would be necessary to spot pinch points either geographically or at any particular band across a reasonable time horizon;
- b. It would also be necessary to assess progress with the affordable staffing plans against managing corporate business risks as well as maintaining outcomes, income and specialist skills;
- c. Whilst recognising the difficulties associated with advance planning in this climate, any prior notice of vacancies over the ensuing three to six month period makes planning to fill affordable posts infinitely easier.

**Action Point 11 Board Members to provide PEFD with examples of the impact of delivering the affordable staffing plans to date.**

**3. Agenda item Staff and Stress Surveys 2006 – Paper B/07/15 Closed**

3.1 Sukhi Ghataore (from NOP) made a short presentation on the staff and stress survey which covered the following:

- a. The results overall;
- b. What the surveys told the Board about employee engagement;
- c. The internal priorities which emerged from the surveys;
- d. A flavour of the open comments; and
- e. NOP's recommendations and conclusions.

3.2 During the subsequent question and answer session, NOP informed the Board that:

- a. The collation of the verbatim comments would be with HSE on Monday next week;
- b. The analysis by overall directorates would be with HSE within the next 10 days;
- c. The breakdowns by individual units would be with HSE by the end

of March.

- 3.3 The Board thanked NOP for the clear presentation and the responses to the questions posed during the presentation.
- 3.4 The Board then discussed the presentation and its response to the surveys during which the following comments were made:
- a. The verbatim comments were important in putting the results in the surveys into an organisational context;
  - b. Subject to an assessment of the verbatim comments, it should then be possible to send out a covering note to staff giving the key issues emerging from the surveys and explaining the key actions the Board propose in response;
  - c. Change, which was unavoidable, and its management was a continuing theme – colleagues in HSE had made significant changes to the way work was done and what was delivered but future change continued to be discussed and developed, such as the how and where we work project;
  - d. Making sure colleagues appreciated the results of the survey and the action the Board proposed to take as a result, required engagement through line managers and good communications;
  - e. It was important to move with some pace on the key emerging issues;
  - f. The results of the stress survey would be referred to the Stress Group, which included Trade Union representation, with a specific request for advice to the Board from that group;
  - g. That consideration is given to how to enter into a dialogue with middle and senior managers about what they need from Board colleagues to support them better and vice versa.
- 3.5 Geoffrey Podger then summed up the discussion as follows:
- a. The Board would wish to see and digest the verbatim comments from the surveys;
  - b. He would then circulate a draft covering note for staff giving the headline results and the reaction of the Board to them – both the covering note and the headline results would go on HSE's intranet;
  - c. The Board would receive a paper in due course giving the advice of the Stress Group on the results of the stress survey and what it told HSE about the Stress Management Standards;
  - d. The Board would defer any decision on whether to run the staff and stress survey together and whether to run another survey later this year.

**Action Point 12 RPD to circulate the verbatim comments to Board members.**

**Action Point 13 Geoffrey Podger to circulate a draft covering note to the surveys for comment by Board Members prior to it and the headline results going on the HSE intranet.**

#### **4 Agenda item 4 – Business Plan for 2007\8 (Paper B/07/16 Closed)**

- 4.1 Vivienne Dews introduced the paper with the following remarks:
- a. The plan was designed to cover the next financial year – work on a longer strategic plan was underway in parallel;
  - b. The draft was work in progress – it drew largely from existing material;
  - c. But there were some innovations such as attribution of resources to functions rather than organisational units – although discussions continued on producing these figures;
  - d. The intention was to put a draft plan to the Commission at its March meeting but help from the Board would be appreciated to help meet this challenging deadline.
- 4.2 During the subsequent discussion, the following remarks were made:
- a. It was important to ensure that the contributions of work such as enforcement across the different business descriptors was included, perhaps in the introduction;
  - b. Whilst it would not be possible for all HSE colleagues to see their work included in this plan, lines of sight were important to staff so they could see how what they did fits in;
  - c. Work on additional performance targets, where appropriate, was needed although this could not be completed in all cases in time for this plan;
  - d. Targets should measure outcomes and not activity - however, it was agreed that for the plan this year the measures already available should be used as there was not time to develop further ones;
  - e. Sections needed added on worker involvement and on HSL;
  - f. The text needed to reflect the current position on progress with the incident reduction PSA target;
  - g. The business plan would be supplemented by operating plans within individual directorates – it was for directors to ensure the operating plans align with and support the business plan;
  - h. The foreword should be reworked and be signed by the Chair only;
  - i. The introduction should be bolstered by adding the narrative threads which tie the whole plan together.
- 4.3 The Board thanked Steve and Sarabjit for all the hard work which had gone into the draft plan and asked that another draft be produced taking the above comments into account.

**Action Point 14 RPD to produce another draft of the plan taking the Board's comments into account.**

#### **5 Agenda item 5 – Performance and Risk Management Report 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter 2006\7 – Paper B/07/17 Closed)**

- 5.1 Vivienne Dews outlined the key themes of the Commission's discussion on the performance report the previous day as follows:
- a. Maintaining the message about target delivery through adequately resourced work activities;
  - b. Expanding the report beyond PSA target delivery; and
  - c. Recognising that this report can only cover so much which

means excluding some activities which are underway.

- 5.2 The Board noted that more work was needed on the sickness absence figures in the Balanced Scorecard and that data was available on the enforcement dashboard which could be included in subsequent reports to the Board. It was also noted that better balance between the areas of work in the report should be achieved and that the PSA report needed to be shortened. The Board thanked the authors for the quality of the paper.

**6 Agenda item 6 – HSE’s Role in response to a serious incident\emergency (Paper B/07/19)**

- 6.1 Elaine Harbour introduced the paper with the following remarks:
- a. The paper gave an update on progress on incident preparedness following the Board discussion last year;
  - b. The paper also asked for agreement to:
    - i. HSE’s Concept of Operations Statement;
    - ii. Merging the major incident and civil contingencies procedures into one emergency response procedure; and
    - iii. The forthcoming civil contingency exercises being used to further improve and spread knowledge about civil contingencies within HSE.

- 6.2 During the subsequent discussion, the following points were made:
- a. The Board would receive a paper on recompense arrangements for HSE staff dealing with major incidents and purchasing of essential items at its next meeting;
  - b. Feedback on how the new arrangements were working would be important especially on such issues as resilience and whether HSE colleagues were comfortable with them.

- 6.3 The Board then agreed the three specific recommendations in paragraph 6.1 above

**Action Point 15 Elaine Harbour to take forward the recommendations in the paper.**

**7 Agenda item 7 – Implications of Government Nuclear Policy for NSD (Paper B/07/21 Closed)**

- 7.1 This part of the minute is closed

**8 Agenda Item 8 – Horizon scanning (Paper B/07/22)**

- 8.1 Jonathan Rees, Patrick McDonald and Tony Bandle introduced the paper with the following remarks:
- a. The Board had invested in horizon scanning to get a significant range of quality products;
  - b. The test now was what use was made of those products in terms of impact on forward planning – a seminar was proposed with key players as a first stage in this embedding process;
  - c. In parallel with using the products, it was proposed to scale back the resource dedicated to horizon scanning within HSL and for CoSAS to provide the intelligent customer role for future work;
  - d. PEFD, HSL and CoSAS, in consultation with SD, would agree how best to manage this transition;
  - e. If the Board accepted the scaling down of resources, HSE should review its commitment to horizon scanning in five years time.

- 8.2 The following points were made during the subsequent discussion:
- a. Embedding was the key forward issue and Board colleagues would find it helpful to have an indication of what help they could give and how;
  - b. There would always be a disconnect between the planning time frames and the horizon scanning time frame;
  - c. That made it important to ensure current workstreams and policy were compatible with likely future developments;
  - d. Several of the products from the horizon scanning work so far were live issues – for example, the ageing workforce, nanotechnology and carbon dioxide sequestration.

8.3 Subject to the points made above, the Board accepted all the recommendations in the paper.

**Action Point 16 SD, PEFD, CoSAS and HSL to take forward the recommendations in the paper.**

## **9 Agenda for March Meeting (B/A07/3)**

- 9.1 The Board agreed to extend the meeting by two hours and include:
- a. A longer item on financial planning for next year;
  - b. Proposed consultation on societal risk; and
  - c. A paper on outstanding issues on responses to major incidents.

**Action Point 17 Peter Buckley to revise the agenda and circulate to Board Members.**

## **10. Any Other Business**

### **10.1 SCS Survey Results**

- 10.1.1 The overall results of the Civil Service SCS Survey would be released on February 15<sup>th</sup>. The second edition of the "Leader" magazine would major on the results and what is proposed to strengthen weaker areas such as Leadership and Management.