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HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMISSION

The Public Services Productivity Panel's 'Better Boards' Report

A Paper by Tony Mulhall

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Cleared by Vic Coleman on 23rd August 2004

Issue

1. The Public Services Productivity Panel (part of HM Treasury) has conducted a study of board governance in executive non-departmental public bodies (NDPBs). The final report is due to be published in the autumn.

Timing

2. No immediate action is required.

Recommendation

3. The Commission notes the likely content of the final report and the implications this will have for board governance of the Health and Safety Commission (HSC) and the Health and Safety Executive (HSE), which both have individual status as executive NDPBs with crown status.

Background

4. The Public Services Productivity Panel (PSPP) is a small group of senior business people and public sector managers, established to identify ways to help improve the productivity of the public sector. Paul Boateng, the Chief Secretary to the Treasury, chairs the panel.
5. Lynton Barker led the study. As well as being a member of the PSPP, he is President of the *Management Consultancies Association* and Executive Chairman of *Hedra*¹.
6. There are 280 executive NDPBs, which spend £20 billion of public money annually.
7. The 2004 Spending Review Report mentioned the study in relation to NDPBs' "important role" in delivering the Government's efficiency programme.

¹ A company (often used by Government) offering consultancy and solutions services.

8. The study involved around 300 questionnaires and a consultation group of 50 people from NDPB boards, their executives and sponsor departments. As far as we know, HSC/E's involvement was limited to Judith Hackitt's response to the questionnaire.
9. PSPP focused on the following issues in conducting the study:
 - Clarifying the remit of NDPBs and their boards;
 - Making sure that boards have the best people on them and the right culture in place for effective performance; and
 - Evaluating and assessing boards' performance to ensure that any necessary changes are identified and taken forward.

Argument

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Consultation

16. We requested information on Lynton Barker's study from the PSPP. No other consultation at this stage.

Presentation

17. None.

Costs and Benefits

18. None at this stage.

Financial/Resource Implications for HSE

19. None at this stage

Environmental Implications

20. None

Other Implications

21. None

Action

22. This paper has already been sent to all members of the HSE Board for information. Lynton Barker's team did not approach HSE to contribute to the study, and there does not appear to be any scope to shape the outcome at this late stage. We will await publication of Lynton Barker's final report (in the autumn) and work with colleagues in DWP to deal with it.