

Health and Safety Commission Minutes**HSC/07/M04**

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Health and Safety Commission**Minutes of a meeting of the Health and Safety Commission held on 17 April 2007 in the Grange Holborn Hotel, London**

<p>Present</p> <p>Bill Callaghan – Chair John Longworth Danny Carrigan Judith Donovan Sayeed Khan Hugh Robertson Robin Dahlberg John Spanswick Sandy Blair</p> <p>Apologies: Liz Snape</p>	<p>HSE Board</p> <p>Geoffrey Podger Justin McCracken Jonathan Rees Alex Brett-Holt Vivienne Dews Colin Douglas Sandra Caldwell Giles Denham Eddie Morland Jane Willis Mike Weightman</p> <p>Apologies: Kevin Myers</p>	<p>Officials:</p> <p>Neal Stone René McTaggart Ann Marie Farmer Mike Lacaille Phil Kemball</p> <p>DWP: Phillip White</p>
1	Welcome/Introduction	
1.1	The Chair opened the formal discussions and welcomed the new Commissioner, Robin Dahlberg, to the Commission. The Chair also welcomed the HSE Board and Phillip White from DWP.	
2	Governance - Results of the Consultation on Merging the Health and Safety Commission and Health and Safety Executive (HSC/07/36)	
2.1	Jonathan Rees introduced the paper relating to the proposed Governance arrangements and made the following remarks: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. The key issues covered by the consultation document included the size, composition and name of the new governing body and the role of local authorities as a partner in the delivery of the health and safety system; b. The consultation document received 162 responses from a wide range of stakeholders. None of the key stakeholders opposed the merger and there was general support for the proposal to merge; c. The main concerns raised were the fear that any merger may result in a loss of independence and accountability for the new body compared to HSC and HSE currently, and how the role of local authorities will be defined; d. If the Commission decided to proceed with the merger then the next stage of the project would be to inform stakeholders and invite the DWP Ministers to consult (in July 07) on detailed proposals for the working arrangements of a new governing body in April 08. 	

<p>2.2</p>	<p>The Commission thanked Jonathan and his team for the work to produce the paper and had a wide ranging discussion which included the following comments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. While the reasons for discussing governance in a closed session were understood, the Commission expressed their concern about the message this may send to stakeholders. As a result it was agreed that the outcome of the discussions should not be closed; b. The results of the consultation are an important factor that needs to be built in to the final decision on the future governance of the Commission and Executive. However, it should not be the deciding factor as a decision must be reached that is in the best interests of the health and safety system as a whole; c. The Commission would like to see more on the role of the local authorities and how they will be communicated with; d. The new arrangements need to clearly identify how, due to the changes, the robustness of the governance arrangements and the health and safety system will be improved rather than simply explain any shift in powers; e. While the structure of the organisation will go some way to help build relationships with local authorities it is not the sole solution – work is needed outside the discussions on Governance so that the senior level relationship is as good as the relationship at working level; f. In deciding on the appropriateness of any governance changes the Commission agreed the need to differentiate between HSE’s enforcement action and the governance of the organisation.
<p>2.3</p>	<p>The Commission thanked officials for all their work and agreed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. That the primary function of the new body should be to protect and improve the health and safety system; b. That the challenge function provided by the current arrangements are a vital part of ensuring robust decision making; c. That further work is needed to provide greater clarity on the role of the new governing body. Further discussions with key representative bodies is also needed; d. To the production of a vision/mission statement which provides clarity on how the changes will work in practice (to be produced by HSE in conjunction with Judith Donovan); e. That it is important to put the overall structure of the new body in place first and allow for flexibility in the arrangements so that the ‘detailed’ arrangements (which are important in their own right) can evolve; f. That the Commission would revisit the proposals having considered the additional information at its May 07 meeting with a view to agreeing the proposals to be put to Ministers in July.