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HEALTH AND SAFETY EXECUTIVE

HSE Board

Minutes of a meeting of the HSE Board held on Wednesday 4 December 2002 at 09:30am in the Fortune Room, Rose Court

Present

Paul Davies
 Vivienne Dews
 Sandra Caldwell
 Alan Osborne
 Justin McCracken
 Peter Graham
 Robert Humm
 Sian Lewis
 Nick Starling
 Kate Timms
 Timothy Walker
 Adrian Ellis

Also attending

For item :3
 Steve Woolley
 Sarah Jones
 Ian Greenwood
 Robert Vaughan
 Sandra Ashcroft
 David Ashton

For items 6&7
 David Ashton
 Brian Whitnell

Apologies; Laurence Williams

Alastair Cannon - Secretariat

1 Draft minutes of the HSE Board meeting held on Wednesday 6 November B/02/M012 (prov).

1.1 The minutes along with their open government status were agreed.

2 Health & Safety; Oral report by Justin McCracken

2.1 The following points were made:

- a It has been proposed by the H&S Committee that the aim in future should be that, as a minimum, HSE ensures it implements timeously its own guidance produced for other employers to show exemplar status. The Board supported this approach.

This will be actioned by those producing such guidance informing HSE's H&S Unit who will act as a central coordinating function. HSE should use the High Level Forum to seek to ensure too that the rest of Whitehall implements such guidance promptly. However, in addition, HSE should aim to pilot its own guidance ahead of launching it., and HSU is happy to provide a similar coordinating function for this.

Action: **Board to inform those involved in guidance production of the need to involve HSU.**

- b The fact that current HSE H&S reports do not include a report on levels of sick pay was raised. It was noted that obtaining this information from current HSE systems is often difficult.

Action: **Vivienne Dews with Justin McCracken to explore how best to access sick leave data and how and where to report it.**

- c It was pointed out that the Annual H&S report should make it clearer that the figures quoted included those for HSE's contractors.

3 Changing HSE: Culture and Behaviours. B/02/056. A paper by Sarah Jones and the Project G team. Presented by Sarah Jones, Ian Greenwood, Robert Vaughan, and Sandra Ashcroft.

3.1 In introducing the paper the presenters made the following points;

- a The Board had already emphasised that the cultural and behavioural changes are an essential part of the change programme that will be needed to garner the benefits of the structural changes.
- b HSE's five values are not yet well known and needed to be embedded in ways of working. They provide a reference point for assessing where HSE is now and where it wants to be.
- c Project G had undertaken an analysis of where HSE is now. The proposals in the paper will bring together projects into a coherent programme on values and behaviours.
- d The values would be incorporated into HSE's new Performance Management System for all staff at Bands 1-6. In addition, personal objectives and work plans for the SCS need to link to behaviours and cultural change.
- e In addition to a leader for each value, a Board coordinator is required to ensure coherence, strategic direction and to ensure that this work retains due priority amongst competing pressures.
- f Reporting progress to the Board on embedding values and cultural change can and should be done using the measures being developed to support HSE's Balanced Scorecard.
- g The resources required to carry through implementing the changes are likely to be significant.

3.2 The following points were made in discussion;

- a Timothy Walker stated that he would lead the value programme himself. It also made sense for Vivienne Dews to be the leader for valuing people.
- b There was discussion on the values pictures; the consensus was that these generally fairly describe and capture what we want HSE to be, look and feel like. However they could also emphasise better the aspects of managers supporting the work of their staff; seeking efficiencies and value for money; they could also usefully be more outward looking - the previously agreed link between the values and desired H&S outcomes could be restated

and made more explicit so make clear the business benefits that are expected to accrue.

Action: Each leader would prioritise practical areas of work that would both embed their value and contribute to improved health and safety outcomes.

c The forthcoming pilots will be crucial events which will help determine how to go about weaving the values through the whole work of the organisation in a value for money way. There was discussion on to what extent the events should have set outcome objectives. The advice from the consultants had been to avoid being too prescriptive to allow the staff to own the process and reach locally relevant conclusions. Against this there was the need to ensure that the events kept in focus the ultimate aim of securing improved health and safety outcomes.

Agreed Overarching high level specific objectives would be stated in advance for future events both to focus the event and to justify the resource.

Agreed The programme should proceed, to be informed by the outcome of the pilots.

Action Vivienne Dews to explore the feasibility of using Modernising Government money beyond 2003.

Action Board members would consider how best to group staff from different Directorates for future events. Sarah Jones and the Project G team would support developing the programme of events.

Agreed Having an individual leader for each value would help ensure that the value was properly considered in the full range of things that HSE does and to ensure that any gaps emerging are addressed. In addition to Vivienne leading on “valuing people”, Steve Coldrick would lead on “being professional”, Gordon Macdonald “Personal responsibility”, Liz Gibby “open and communicative” and Vic Coleman “innovative and learning”.

Agreed Timothy Walker will chair a group to meet with the value leaders to review progress periodically.

Agreed All the SCS to have personal business objectives and performance measures that support the changes.

Action Sarah Jones to draft a message to staff to be agreed by Timothy Walker.

4 Change Programme: Communications. B/02/053 A paper by Kate Timms.

4.1 Kate introduced this paper with the following points;

a Before deciding how we wish to communicate we must first decide what we want to communicate - this paper represents a progress report.

b The HSC has before it the task of its “positioning”, what the strategic dilemmas are, and where to place HSC/E to be most effective in a modern economy.

c The product of this ongoing work will be;

- i) the structure required to make communication most effective and ii) where HSE/C are going strategically
- 4.2 The following points were raised in the general discussion:
- a There were clear and strong links between this work and the behaviours expected of staff.
 - b It would be helpful to have a vision of the organization that could link with the desired objectives (rather than a vision linked to the mission), but also it would be useful to have defined the differences between, “vision”, “mission” and “values”.
- Action Alan Osborne to discuss definitions with Peter Graham**
- c The Strategic Choices given on the last page of the paper might be misinterpreted; these were intended as poles on a spectrum along which a balance needed to be made.
- Agreed: To replace “strategic choices” with “strategic balances” prior to publishing the paper.**

5 Change programme: SCS recruitment; Women's Views B/02/054. Paper by Kate Timms.

- 5.1 In introducing the paper Kate made the following points;
- a That not all the issues raised were simply ones of gender.
 - b There were evident links with behaviours and wider issues.
 - c Two particular practical issues came out of the paper i) information sharing and ii) keeping in touch with the HSE employees seconded elsewhere.

Action Vivienne Dews to ensure that SCS vacancies in OGDs are circulated to Band 2 as well as Band 1.

- d There was a need to demystify the SCS and what it does and how its work might differ from that of other grades.
- e The jump from Band 2 to SCS is particularly large in operational directorates.
- f Travel and quality of life issues figured frequently in comments.
- g Effective senior management training is not offered in HSE but is offered elsewhere in other government departments, and may be a factor affecting in staff seeking promotion to SCS.
- h There appears also to be a issue of confidence; it appeared that many staff lacked the confidence to apply for SCS posts.
- i The recent changes in methods of recruitment to HSE had led to a significant increase in the numbers of women joining and therefore there should be a wider base from which future women candidates for the SCS could be drawn.

Action Kate Timms and Vivienne Dews to consider whether there are any specific women/gender issues and consider what should be done to address these.

6 HSE Retirement Policy. B/02/048 Paper by John Roberts. Presenters David Ashton & Brian Whitnell

- 6.1 In introducing the paper the following points were made;
- a The Board had agreed earlier in the year to adopt the principle that working beyond retirement age would be at HSE’s discretion, dependent upon satisfactory efficiency and HSE’s business need.

- b However, a European Directive was due to be transposed into domestic law by 2006 which, if transposed without conditions, would render HSE's current retirement policy unlawful.
- c The numbers who might seek to work beyond retirement age was not known with any accuracy, therefore could not be costed.
- d Although HSE's workforce is aging, there can be a business benefit in retaining skills.

6.2 A number of points were made and questions raised in discussion;

- a Robert Humm pointed out that it was not yet clear that the Directive would be transposed into domestic legislation without modification.
- b Any extension of the retirement age would have to be considered in relation to the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act.
- c There appeared to be a conflict between the Directive and current instructions from the Cabinet Office on the retirement policy for the SCS.
- d It was felt that if there was to be a significant change to the retirement policy the basis of the change and the likely cost would have to be known.

Action: David Ashton , in consultation with Robert Humm, to explore further the legal, financial and policy issues - recognising that these are unlikely to be resolved soon. The subject to come back before the Board early next year.

Agreed In the meantime the present policy stands.

7 Performance Pay and Management System: Bands 1-6. B/02/051 Paper by Chris Findlow.

7.1 David Ashton introduced the paper by noting the main features of the performance package and outlined the links with performance pay and post filling arrangements. He noted too that the Trade Unions had indicated that they would ballot members on this package.

7.2 The following points were made in discussion;

- a It would be helpful if some local flexibility were retained in deciding who should receive a high performance award - accepting that such flexibility should be exercised in line with central guidance.
- b The past increase in the number of permissible Box A awards to 20% from 10% had almost entirely eliminated complaints from staff and managers that the system constrained the numbers of those they wished to award.
- c Some written record of the basis upon which an award was made is required, but the record keeping requirement should be as light as possible.
- d Discussions of separate arrangements for performance awards for Band 4 trainee inspectors were ongoing.

Agreed To retain a performance award system, but one that incorporated a measure of local flexibility and minimal bureaucracy.

Agreed To approve the work to ensure that past performance was considered in post filling arrangements.

Agreed The proposal that annually specific corporate priorities for

behaviours are encompassed in staff workplan personal objectives.

Agreed Subject to the above points to put formal proposals to HSE's Trade Unions.

DIRECTOR GENERAL'S PRIVATE OFFICE

December 2002