

Health and Safety Executive Board Minutes		HSE/06/M02	
Meeting Date:	1 February 2006	FOI Status:	Fully Open
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Exemptions:	None		

HEALTH AND SAFETY EXECUTIVE
Minutes of the HSE Board meeting held on Wednesday
1 February 2006 in Rose Court at 9:30am

Present

Geoffrey Podger
Jonathan Rees
Alex Brett-Holt
Sandra Caldwell
Paul Davies
Vivienne Dews
Giles Denham
Colin Douglas
Kevin Myers
Mike Weightman
Jane Willis

Also attending

Rosalind Roberts for item 4
Alison Scott (DWP) for item 6 onwards
Mike Lacaille and Stuart Clark for item 7

Apologies

Justin McCracken

Minutes

Peter Buckley

1 Minutes of the HSE Board held on 4 January and the Action Points

1.1 The minutes of the last meeting were agreed.

2 Health and Safety

Monthly Update (paper number B/06/013)

2.1 Vivienne Dews introduced this paper and focussed on two particular issues. The first issue was that the number of RIDDORs had increased by three– one major injury and two three-day incidents. This meant that HSE might exceed its RIDDOR target for the year. This would be disappointing although HSE's performance this year on RIDDOR incidents was much better than last.

2.2 The second issue was an upturn in the sickness absence figures over the period October to December of last year. During a wide-ranging discussion the following points were made:

- a) HSE has already done a lot on better managing sickness absence in particular in terms of raising management awareness and capability to deal with the issue.
- b) Revised procedures would also come in to force from April this year.
- c) The political importance of managing sickness absence well should not be underplayed.

- d) Other organisations had tried reward measures to try to manage down the rate of sickness absence amongst their staff.
- e) HSE should agree with its occupational health service how best to secure early interventions to help HSE staff return back to work as quickly as possible.
- f) Other departments were trying “duvet” days – these involved an individual ringing their line manager to ask for a days leave on the day in question which would be granted if work pressures and management allowed.
- g) Job satisfaction contributes significantly to reduction in sickness absence.
- h) There was a perceived disparity between senior staff who might opt not to come in to the office on a particular day and those less senior staff who did not have such flexibility.
- i) HSE needs sickness absence data in real time with a better breakdown of the figures than was currently available. Implementation of the new Human Resources system later this year would deliver this.

- 2.3 The Board then agreed on the following actions:
- a) How we better manage sickness absence would be the subject of informal discussions with the Trade Unions;
 - b) Discussions would commence with HSE’s occupational health service on how best to secure early interventions to help HSE staff return back to work as quickly as possible;
 - c) The data available from the 1 April would be produced as real time data and would be more broken down within directorates than is currently available;
 - d) The board would have another discussion at its March meeting on what more might be done to better manage sickness absence.

Action point 12 Discuss informally with the Trade Unions how to improve sickness absence management– Vivienne Dews

Action point 13 Consider how to improve the standard of service given by our occupational health provider – Ian McConaghy

Action point 14 Board paper for March Meeting on what more might be done to better manage sickness absence – Vivienne Dews

- 2.4 The Board then went on to discuss the breadth of the monthly health and safety reports and the presentation of the statistical data. The Board were concerned that:
- a) The Board’s visibility on health and safety issues was not high enough;
 - b) The Board’s efforts to communicate what HSE was doing to better manage the health and safety of staff was not having the desired impact; and
 - c) There was a potential mis-match between the risks posed by HSE’s business and the focus of discussions both at the Board and with our staff.

- 2.5 The Board agreed that from 1 April the health and safety report would be a broader based document focussing on our key risks as

well as the important area of reporting progress against targets. The Board also asked that the statistical information in future monthly health and safety reports focussed on actual achievements rather than projections of what might be achieved against targets set.

- 2.6 Geoffrey Podger thanked Vivienne for picking the health and safety item up at such short notice.

Action point 15 Revised format of the monthly health and safety report to be produced from 1 April – Health and Safety Unit

3 HSE's Engagement with HSL (copies of the slides for the presentation are on the intranet).

- 3.1 Paul Davies and Eddie Morland gave a presentation to the Board on "improving the HSE-HSL partnership". The presentation took as its starting point that the relationship between HSE and HSL was already good but it could be improved.

- 3.2 The background to the use of science in HSE was that the Office of Science and Technology were just completing a review of HSE's science. It was likely to conclude that HSE does good science, it does it well, and it then uses the result well in terms of policy and delivery. But the report would also recommend some improvements, particularly on strengthening science strategy and simplifying how science is commissioned and delivered by HSE/HSL. Simplification should reduce overhead costs whilst allowing a better concentration on improving value for money.

- 3.3 The presentation then:
- a) Identified what needed to change;
 - b) Identified what success would like look like;
 - c) Outlined some organisational changes within HSL to better align HSL's organisation with HSE's objectives and to meet the identified success criteria;
 - d) Reinforced HSL's commitment to being competitive and to giving good value for money both to HSE and to its other customers.

- 3.4 In addition to the planned changes, Paul and Eddie identified four key issues which required further discussion and work as follows:
- a) Science plans and stakeholder engagement.
 - b) Longer term planning.
 - c) The role of HSL.
 - d) The management of the science budget.

- 3.5 The Board supported the general direction of travel for HSL and HSE as outlined in the presentation and asked that the following factors be taken in to account as further work progresses:
- a) There was support for the proposition that programmes should be supported by a well-informed science plan, but that plan should be proportionate to the scale and duration of the programme it is supporting.
 - b) HSE's science strategy needed to be on a longer time frame than some of HSE's current programmes, and needed to involve the delivery directorates and a horizon scanning capacity.

- c) The role of the specialists in HSE, and in particular the corporate topic group's role as an intelligent customer needed to be clear;
- d) HSE\HSL also needed to examine the balance between hard and soft sciences and what services should be home grown and those which could be bought in.
- e) HSE's specialists needed to be a part of the proposed work streams;
- f) A 3 to 5 year HSE business strategy would greatly assist HSL in planning to meet HSE's future needs.
- g) The skills set needed to commission science and research to better help HSE deliver needed to be examined.
- h) Knowledge management was an integral part of better science performance by both HSE and HSL, particularly in eliminating duplication of work.
- i) The fundamental review offered an opportunity to move this agenda forward.

Action point 16 Paul Davies and Eddie Morland to take forward the resolution of the 4 key areas taking into account the Board's views expressed during the debate

Action point 17 Jonathan Rees to commission work on development of a 3 – 5 year business strategy

4 Presentation on Progress with the Enforcement Strategic Enabling Programme

4.1 Sandra Caldwell made a presentation to the Board on the Enforcement Strategic Enabling Programme. Sandra began by observing that Lord Hunt had said in a recent House of Lords debate "I attach great importance to enforcement; undoubtedly it remains an important tool in securing compliance".

4.2 Sandra then reminded the Board of the enforcement programme aims, and listed some of the achievements to date. Sandra was particularly pleased that the local authorities had made such a commitment to this programme. As a result the programme products would be better and would resonate better with our local authority partner enforcers.

4.3 Sandra then went on to seek the Board's views on 4 key emerging issues:

- a) Cross-government research on the ripple effect of enforcement.
- b) Mixed messages about the context and importance of enforcement in delivering health and safety outcomes.
- c) Proactive (pre-harm) enforcement.
- d) Structural change to deliver more efficient and effective enforcement.

4.4 On the value of cross-government research, the Board agreed that HSE should work with fellow enforcers on this issue.

4.5 On mixed messages, the Board believed that HSE should build on the statement made by Lord Hunt in the House of Lords.

- 4.6 On the issue of proactive enforcement, the Board discussion centred on how to reinvest the efficiency savings into operational activity. The Board was content for some of the resources freed up to be used on more proactive enforcement, with the aim of achieving a positive impact on health and safety outcomes. This meant that the targeting of proactive interventions needed to be well thought out and documented, needed to include both health and safety issues and the outcome from these activities needed to be evaluated.
- 4.7 The Board was clear that it did not want to change either the criteria for the investigation of incidents or the procedures for deciding when enforcement action might be appropriate.
- 4.8 On the issue of structure, the Board encouraged the programme Board to:
- a) Adopt which of the structures it thought best on the basis of the evidence before them.
 - b) Consult carefully on any structural changes proposed.
 - c) Make best use of the data available on enforcement to both set targets and/or performance indicators where appropriate.
- 4.9 Finally the Board asked for a short paper on the separate production of an offences and penalties report. This paper should look at other alternatives of integrating an important health and safety input with the achievement of our overall health and safety targets and outcomes. Once the Board had decided what was best in terms of the offences and penalties report, Lord Hunt would need to know.

Action point 18 Sandra Caldwell to take forward the conclusions of the Board discussion and to dovetail the conclusions of the programme board's work with that of the fundamental review

Action point 19 Sandra Caldwell to bring a paper on the offences and penalties report back to the next meeting of the Board

5 Staff Survey – Follow-up Discussion

- 5.1 Geoffrey Podger thanked all the Board members for their contribution to the feedback on their discussions with staff on the staff survey.
- 5.2 The Board agreed that a general statement of its response to the staff survey should be prepared. In drafting such a statement it was important that the following considerations were borne in mind:
- a) The statement should have substance to it.
 - b) It should be a statement of proposed action but deliberately seeking feedback from staff.
 - c) It was hoped that this would convey a strong element of both consultation and on the Board listening to the views of staff.
 - d) It should not be a long list of new initiatives.
 - e) But it should contain what things we are doing differently or better as a result of the staff survey.
 - f) It needed to be clear about what the topics that the Board were taking forward were and these could include:
 - i. Performance, including both high performance awards and in terms of tackling poor performers
 - ii. HSE geography

- iii. Expenses
- iv. Pay
- v. The management of change
- vi. Leadership and management
- vii. Communications
- viii. How the Board could convey better what it was doing and how the decisions it was making would affect the day to day work of HSE employees
- ix. It would need to deal with people's frustrations in a manner which showed proper emotional empathy
- x. The issue of bullying would need to be addressed

5.3 Peter Buckley was asked to produce a first draft of the statement by 10 February.

Action point 20 Peter Buckley to produce a first draft of the Board's statement of response to the staff survey by 10 February

6 The Interplay Between the Major Incidents Response Investigation Arrangements and Civil Contingency Arrangements

6.1 The discussion on this agenda item was postponed until the next Board meeting.

7 PSA targets: Summary Performance Report for Quarter 3 (paper number B/O6/O14)

7.1 Mike Lacaille and Stuart Clark introduced this item. There were two issues for the Board to consider. Was the Board content for the report to go to the Commission, and did the paper give the Board all that they needed to make a judgement on the quarter 3 performance.

7.2 The Board were particularly pleased with how the quality of the reporting and progress against the PSA targets had improved over the last year. The Board was therefore happy to approve the overall Amber\Green rating for progress against target.

7.3 Although there were some reservations about the amount of detail in the report, the Commission were content with the current format and so the Board agreed that it could go forward to them.

7.4 It was also agreed that the work continuing on the development of the balanced scorecard was an important complement to the reporting on delivery against the PSA target. The balanced scorecard would allow discussions on the relative balance of programmes and the strategic direction of the organisation in terms of delivering its performance targets.

Action Point 21 Mike Lacaille to forward the paper on the Commission Secretariat.

8 A.O.B.

Draft agenda for the 1 March Board meeting

- 8.1 The Board agreed to extend the draft agenda for the March meeting which would be held in Bootle by the addition of papers on:
- a) Sickness absence.
 - b) Performance management.
 - c) Civil contingency.
 - d) Offences and penalties report.

Action Point 22 Revised agenda for the March meeting to be prepared by Peter Buckley and circulated with the draft minutes.

- 8.2 The Board also agreed to hold a reception for staff in Redgrave Court after the next board meeting on 1st March. The reception would start at 3 o'clock and finish at 5. If available, Bill Callaghan would be invited also to attend.

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