

Health and Safety Executive Board Minutes		HSE/06/M07	
Meeting Date:	5 July 2006	Open Gov. Status:	Fully open
Type of Paper:	Above the line	Paper File Ref:	
Exemptions:	None		

## HEALTH AND SAFETY EXECUTIVE

### Minutes of the HSE Board meeting held on Wednesday 5 July 2006 in the Fortune Room, London

#### Present

Geoffrey Podger  
Justin McCracken  
Jonathan Rees  
Alex Brett-Holt

Sandra Caldwell  
Giles Denham  
Colin Douglas  
John Ewins  
Patrick McDonald  
Eddie Morland  
Mike Weightman  
Jane Willis

#### Also attending

Tim Beaumont (Agenda item 2)  
Eddie Bailey and Laurence Monaghan (Agenda item 3)  
Vic Coleman (Agenda item 5)  
Graeme Henderson, Elaine Harbour and Nick Booker (Agenda item 8)

#### Apologies

Vivienne Dews  
Kevin Myers  
Alison Scott

#### Minutes

Peter Buckley

#### **1 Minutes of the HSE Board held on 9 June and the Action Points**

1.1 The minutes of the last meeting were agreed without amendment.

#### **2 Health and Safety – Significant Risk Areas - Stress (Paper 06/06/27)**

2.1 Justin McCracken introduced the paper by reminding the Board that the driver for action on stress was HSE's wish to be seen as an exemplar employer alongside the size of the problem within HSE. The paper sought the Board's agreement to the Corporate Action Plan and asked Board Members to champion control of stressors within their areas of responsibility.

2.2 Tim Beaumont then gave a more detailed introduction making the following points:

- a. Stress when combined with depression currently costs HSE £35k a month in salary costs;
- b. HSE takes the lead on the Ministerial Task Force on improving management of sickness absence so needed to set a good example;
- c. Annex 1 to the paper is the Corporate Action Plan which identifies tasks, sets deadlines and assigns responsibilities;
- d. The main themes of the action plan are:
  - i. Improving the management of change;

- ii. Continuation with the Stress Working Group;
  - iii. Refining and monitoring progress on the divisional and directorate stress action plans;
  - iv. Improving HSE's management capability;
  - v. Dealing satisfactorily with inappropriate behaviour and/or with bullying;
  - vi. Dealing better with "environmental" issues such as room temperature, IT etc.
- e. Annex 2 records what is already underway;
- f. The key issues for the Board were around providing visible support and leadership in reducing stressors and providing 6 monthly updates on progress against the divisional and directorate action plans.

2.3 In the subsequent Board discussion the following points were made:

- a. The Board was keen to support its managers in their management of individuals where personal performance is an issue – as well as encouraging them to manage effectively to reduce stressors in the HSE work environment;
- b. The divisional and directorate stress action plans needed to be dynamic and organic to achieve best results;
- c. Outside organisations report measurable substantial benefits from adopting the stress management standards approach;
- d. Lots of potential stressors and their remediation - e.g. day to day behaviours - are within the control of individuals and their managers and small changes can make a big difference;
- e. Early intervention from HSE's Occupational Health providers can help individuals and managers prevent absences from work;
- f. As well as Board members providing leadership on dealing with potential stressors, it was also important to regularly communicate to staff what was being done to deal with stressors within divisions and directorates.
- g. Rather than produce six monthly reports of progress against the divisional and directorate action plans, a collation of examples of best practice would be produced in the autumn and then this process reviewed.
- h. Issues raised by stress survey tally well with issues raised in other ways, e.g. the staff survey. It is sensible to 'join-up' the communication of stress with communication arising from some of these other initiatives

2.4 In summing up the discussion, Geoffrey thanked Tim and Elizabeth Gynge for their help in preparing a good challenging paper, the recommendations that were accepted with the qualification on the progress against action plans as discussed.

**Action Point 72 D/Ds to report on progress against stress action plans, emphasising good practise, in six months time to HR Service Centre.**

**Action Point 73 Stress action plan to be published with publicity arranged in consultation with stress working group and internal communications.**

**3. Agenda item 3 – Update from the Enforcement Strategic**

## **Enabling Programme Paper B/06/53 and PowerPoint presentation**

- 3.1 Sandra Caldwell introduced Eddie Bailey and Laurence Monaghan from the Enforcement Programme Team. Sandra went through a PowerPoint presentation (which is also on the intranet) covering the following:
- a. The programme aims;
  - b. Improving the efficiency and effectiveness of investigations;
  - c. Enforcement supporting FIT3;
  - d. Communications; and
  - e. Beyond the Programme.
- 3.2 During the subsequent discussion the following points were made:
- a. The Delivery Theme Team of the Fundamental Review were engaging constructively with the Enforcement Programme Team as being as effective enforcer was a key component of effective delivery;
  - b. Preparations were in hand for the November release of the Health and Safety Offences and Penalties report which would be as, if not more, challenging than last year;
  - c. Although the Local Authorities were engaged in the programme the importance of consistency across Local Authorities should be recognised and perhaps the issue aired as a part of the Commission Paper on the Macrory review of Regulatory Penalties;
  - d. Cost of investigations was one part of the workstream dealing with efficiency;
  - e. Effective read across to the Major Hazard Sector was important on such things as structure of investigations and time to closure of an investigation;
  - f. There was strong support for the research into the ripple effect of enforcement action;
  - g. The underpinning of enforcement by the Enforcement Policy Statement was key and any planned revision of the statement would need to balance expectations of the duty holder with those of the victim and/or their relatives.
- 3.3 Geoffrey thanked Sandra for the presentation and Eddie and Laurence for the quality of the supporting paper. Geoffrey asked that these thanks also be passed on to the other members of the team. The Board considered that HSE's approach to enforcement was rational and balanced. And that HSE staff take difficult decisions which are then subject to challenge retrospectively – but this should not deter HSE staff from taking robust decisions when necessary and in accordance with HSE's procedures.
- 4 **Agenda item 4 – Legal Risk Register (Paper B/06/54 fully closed and on limited circulation)**
- 4.1 The minutes of this part of the Board meeting are closed.
- 5 **Agenda item 5 – PSA Targets for the CSR 2007 period - Paper B/06/59**

- 5.1 Vic Coleman introduced the paper with the following remarks:
- a. The purpose of the discussion was for the Board to give a steer on a position to put to the Commission on a PSA target;
  - b. The DWP had now proposed to Ministers that promoting health and safety at work should be one of 6 Departmental objectives with a single PSA in support of this objective;
  - c. The Board would now need to explore what that PSA target might look like - for example should conventional health and safety and major hazards be separate or combined?
  - d. In addition to any PSA target, it is likely that the DWP would want performance agreements detailing what the priorities were and success criteria for reaching them.
- 5.2 In the subsequent discussion the following points were made:
- a. It was excellent news that the department had recognised the importance of having a PSA target for health and safety;
  - b. There was a clear link between what a target covered and the money provided to deliver it;
  - c. Given this linkage there was a dilemma to be resolved around a high level target supported by specific performance measures or a target which was more detailed reflecting the diversity of HSE's business;
  - d. Both the Commission and external stakeholders were very attached to the linkage between the current PSA conventional health and safety target and the revitalising targets - that argued for maintaining such a target into the CSR 2007 period.
- 5.3 In summing up the discussion, Geoffrey asked Vic to prepare a short note for the Chair to orally update Commissioners at their meeting later this month on the developments on a PSA for the next CSR period.

**Action Point 74 Vic Coleman to prepare a note for the Chair to use at the Commission meeting later this month.**

**6 Agenda item 6 – Diversity Progress Report - Paper B/06/56**

- 6.1 Alex Brett-Holt introduced the paper on behalf of Vivienne Dews. The paper:
- a. Noted progress on delivering the Board's Diversity Vision;
  - b. Requested continuing support for the staff networks on race, women and disability;
  - c. Asked for a steer on how the Board could best report progress against their own diversity objectives for the last reporting year.
- 6.2 During the subsequent discussion the following points were made:
- a. There was a continuing need to inject the diversity messages even when making difficult decisions;
  - b. Maintaining momentum with the diversity agenda was also important;
  - c. The number of declared candidates from ethnic minorities at recruitment exercises was declining which was very disappointing;
  - d. The need for, and support for, the staff networks was

accepted.

- e. On how best to report progress against the diversity objectives the Board preferred to report collectively on achievements rather than on an individual basis.

6.3 Geoffrey thanked the authors of the paper and asked that the action point on reporting back on achievements against diversity objectives be coordinated by Cath Cottam and cleared by correspondence.

6.4 Geoffrey also asked that Gaynor Coldrick investigate what might be done to improve the number of declared candidates from ethnic minorities applying for HSE posts.

**Action Point 75** **Cath Cottam to coordinate and produce a report back on achievements against diversity objectives.**

**Action Point 76** **Gaynor Coldrick to investigate what might be done to improve the number of declared candidates from ethnic minorities applying for HSE posts.**

## **7** **Agenda item 7 – Any Other Business – Agenda for the August Meeting**

7.1 The agenda for the August Meeting was agreed with the addition of an item on HSE's charging regimes. It was also agreed to hold the meeting in London.

**Action Point 77** **Peter Buckley to amend the agenda and recirculate.**

## **7.2** **Agenda item 7 – Any Other Business – Governance**

7.2.1 Jonathan updated the Board on Governance following the Commission's Meeting in early July. The Commission had agreed to set up a joint HSC\E Working Group to take this issue forward consisting of Sandy Blair, Margaret Burns, Danny Carrigan, John Longworth, Jonathan Rees, Alex Brett-Holt, Colin Douglas and Vivienne Dews. The Group would hold its first meeting later this month.

## **8** **Agenda item 8 – Familiarisation session for the Board on dealing with civil contingencies and major incidents**

8.1 Justin McCracken introduced Graeme Henderson, Elaine Harbour and Nicholas Booker. The purpose of the agenda item was to:

- a. Seek the Board's agreement to a corporate exercise to test HSE's contingency planning and arrangements in October this year and to a rolling plan of such annual tests over the next three years; and
- b. To update the Board on the revised procedures for dealing with these type of incidents concentrating on the role of Board Members;

8.2 The Board:

- a. Noted the need to balance testing the procedures live against existing diary commitments;
- b. Asked that the test reflects what had been learnt about HSE's procedures and processes from the incidents which had occurred in the recent past;
- c. Asked that due consideration be given to looking wider than

HSE in terms of active involvement.

- 8.3 The Board were then taken through the revised procedures as reflected in the attached PowerPoint Presentation.
- 8.4 Geoffrey thanked the team for their presentation and recorded the Board's formal agreement to a corporate exercise this October and to a rolling three-year programme of such tests.

**Action Point 78 Elaine Harbour to take forward the planning for the exercise in October.**

I:\Strategy and Intelligence\Library\Board Meetings\2006\August\papers\1 m - minutes of the July Meeting.doc