

Meeting Date:	7 December 2005	FOI Status:	Fully Open
Type of Paper:	Minutes	Paper File Ref:	
Exemptions:	None		

**HEALTH AND SAFETY EXECUTIVE
Minutes of the HSE Board meeting held on Wednesday
7 December 2005 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

Also attending

Roger Fisher-Payne (NOP) (Item 3i)
Terri Griffiths (NOP) (Item 3i)
Steve Dennis (Items 3ii – 3 v)
Susan MacKenzie (Items 3ii – 3 v)
Ian McConaghy (Items 3ii – 3 v)
Alison McKenzie-Folan (Items 3ii – 3 v)
Les Philpott (Item 5i)
Graham Collins (Item 5i)
Bill Tompkins (Item 6)
Andy McGory (Item 6)

Apologies

Justin McCracken
Jane Willis

Minutes

Peter Buckley

1 Minutes of the HSE Board held on 2 November and the Action Points

The minutes from the last meeting were agreed without amendment.

Under matters arising, the Secretariat agreed to circulate the most recent update on the management of the health and safety implications of the Olympics 2012, and agreed to take regular oral updates on this from Sandra Caldwell as and when required.

Action Point 33 Secretariat to circulate most recent briefing note on the Olympics.

Action Point 34 Sandra Caldwell to provide oral updates on the Olympics as and when required.

2 Our People

The results of the Staff Survey – first pass (Paper B/05/64)

2.1 Roger Fisher-Payne (from NOP Consultants) did a short presentation, the highlights of which were:

1. In the general areas of "Pride and Job Satisfaction", HSE's overall results were below the national benchmark standards, except in the area of being proud to work for HSE.
2. On the management of change, the satisfaction rate was 12%,

- and this was a consistent result across the organisation.
3. The key areas identified for improvement were:
 - a. Satisfaction with job is quite low (at 53%) and a quarter of staff are dissatisfied with their job.
 - b. The management of change, the impact of change and how it will work out in practice is not perceived as involving consultation (17%).
 - c. Perceptions towards leadership and management within HSE are generally low, especially towards senior managers. Only 15% think HSE is well managed or have confidence in senior managers.
 - d. Belief in the commitment of the HSE to act on problems identified in the survey is low, in particular whether the Board and Executive will act on the identified problems.
 - e. Communications have improved slightly but still need to improve.
 4. The key strengths of HSE were as follows:
 - a. Three quarters of staff understand how their work contributes to the objectives of the HSE.
 - b. Almost two thirds of HSE staff are aware of the HSE's strategic objectives.
 - c. Three quarters of staff feel comfortable in making their views known about issues that affect them.
 - d. Three quarters of employees believe that HSE is an Equal Opportunities Employer.
 - e. Perceptions towards Learning and Development within HSE are generally positive.
 - f. Three quarters of staff feel that they are able to strike a good balance between work and home life.
 5. Roger then explained that individual divisions and directorates would be given their individual breakdowns shortly. Some further analysis of the figures would also be done to look in more detail at issues such as ethnicity and to identify those areas of the business that had more positive figures than others, so HSE might build on their experience.

2.2

The Board discussed the results in some detail during which the following points were made:

1. The key issues that emerged were change and leadership at Board level.
2. Leadership is not just about being visible, although that was desirable. More fundamental issues needed to be addressed.
3. Management may have made too little in the past about what is constant, rather than focussing continually on what is changing.
4. And in the past when management wanted to make changes, the connection has not always been made between what was being undertaken and how it would improve health and safety.
5. The response to the staff survey should apply the subsidiarity rule. There was no need to drive everything from the centre and there are some things that are done better within directorates where the messages and the remedies can be targeted appropriately.

2.3

The Board then agreed that the Chief Executive would issue a message to staff on the staff survey results and make clear that all the Board felt:

1. That the results were not acceptable; and
2. That the Board wanted to improve its performance and with it the performance of the organisation; and
3. That the Board wanted to arrange a period of listening to the views of staff about the results and what it should do to improve on those areas identified in the survey.

2.4 Geoffrey would circulate a draft of his Christmas message to the Board for their comments. It was also agreed that the planned exchange briefing on the results of the staff survey would be delayed until the action in 2.3 above was completed.

2.5 The Board and all managers would be encouraged to discuss the staff survey with their staff during January and provide feedback to their respective Board Members. The issue would also be raised at the Whitley meeting later that week.

2.6 Finally the Board agreed to rerun the staff survey in a year's time after which it would discuss again the frequency of subsequent surveys.

Action Point 35 **Geoffrey to circulate to Board Members a draft of his proposed message.**

Action Point 36 **Board Members to discuss the staff survey with staff during January and ask their managers to do likewise.**

Action Point 37 **The Staff Survey would be repeated in a year's time.**

Action Point 38 **Colin Douglas to select another issue for the January exchange briefings.**

2ii Implementing the HR Strategy (Paper B/05/66)

2.7 Vivienne Dews introduced this paper with the following contextual points. The Board had been working on a workforce strategy for some time. There were three drivers for this work:

- i. Improving delivery;
- ii. Improving management and leadership; and
- iii. Spending less resource on corporate support.

The paper is a progress report on the ongoing work but there are some key decisions that need to be taken.

2.8 Susan Mackenzie and Ian McConaghy then added some further introductory points as follows:

1. This programme of work was a significant one and the current paper was about trying to make significant differences in some key areas.
2. A number of criteria had been applied to put the work programme together such as:
 - a) Where were the quick wins
 - b) Trying to devolve more to line managers
 - c) Empowering line managers and then holding them to account
3. The implementation plan covered:
 - a) Devolving disciplinary responsibilities.

- b) Developing a learning and development strategy.
 - c) The foundation programme.
 - d) Workforce planning.
 - e) Post filling.
4. All of these were key areas of work to put us on the front foot. Some of them were difficult issues especially in respect of negotiations with HSE's Trade Unions.
 5. Some challenges remain, for example on management capability where a dedicated project manager would be appointed. Individual divisions and directorates were being encouraged to review the number of managers. Some external work had been commissioned on high performance awards.
 6. It was also proposed to develop a new core framework that would be about knowledge, skills and behaviour to drive performance. This needed to be related to the Professional Skills for Government agenda and to take into account the current or future values of HSE. This core framework would then be used to recruit staff and as a basis on how to develop them.

2.9 The Board then discussed whether the shape of the programme was right and then moved on to address the specific issues raised in the paper.

2.10 On whether the shape of the programme was right, the following points were made:

1. The approach is really helpful.
2. The priorities are right.
3. Some underlying themes to brigade the work streams around were needed, which might be:
 - a) Letting managers manage wherever possible
 - b) Bringing in and bringing on good quality staff and giving them opportunities to maximise their potential
 - c) Systems that support not hinder managers
 - d) Bringing staff with us with the changes
 - e) Maintaining a strong belief in the fairness of HSE's procedures for the staff and the organisation

2.11 The number one priority was workforce planning and the Board were keen for this to be done as soon as possible. The second priority was post filling and the Board agreed with the recommendations in Annex 8 of the paper.

2.12 The Board then went on to discuss the specific points in the paper during which the following points were made:

1. HSE needed some quick wins for the staff as well as for the organisation.
2. The post filling process does not currently recognise potential and is too heavily competency based.
3. Trying out people with real potential by moving them around was needed.

2.13 Geoffrey Podger then summed up, in the following way:

1. Grateful for the work.
2. The Board endorsed the recommendations in the paper.
3. The Board were keener on some things than others and in

particular had a keen interest in progressing the work on the workforce planning.

4. PD needs now to get on with this and do it.
5. A Board HR sub-group would be formed.

Action Point 39 Susan Mackenzie and Ian McConaghy to take forward the recommendations in the paper and to develop the strategy around the themes in paragraph 2.10 above.

2 iii HSE Geography – Recommendations of the Board Sub-Group (Paper B/05/67)

2.14 The Board expressed appreciation for the paper and the work which underlay it. There was a need to consider further the balance of advantage in implementing the specific proposal and also what the alternatives might be. The Board would return to the issue in due course.

2iv HR Modernisation – a New Model for Recruitment and Development of Specialists (Paper B/05/68)

2.15 Paul Davies in introducing the paper made the following points:

1. HSE has better marketed itself recently and so has improved the success rate in terms of recruitment of specialists.
2. But there is still a question of supply in what is a very tight marketplace.
3. Other businesses have remodelled how they get access to specialist advice and had found other people to do it or have grown their own specialists within their own organisations.
4. The proposal in the paper was to adopt a similar approach and to trial it.
5. The costings are slightly speculative.
6. But the Board was being asked to agree in principle and to let OMT act as the management team of the process.

2.16 The Board then discussed the paper during which the following points were made:

1. There were real opportunities presented by this proposal and lots of positives in selling this message.
2. It built on one of the successes identified in the staff survey – the quality of the training and development HSE gives its people.
3. Although this would be a good short-term solution, there were misgivings about whether or not on its own it could provide the long-term solution to HSE's need to have access to specialist advice.
4. And HSE may want to explore partnership approaches with organisations that were having similar problems.

2.17 In summing up, Geoffrey made the following points:

1. The proposals in the paper were agreed.
2. HSE would not recruit like this all of the time or every time it wanted to recruit specialists.
3. HSE will have a mix and match approach.
4. HSE must ensure that if the market loosens up and it can afford traditional specialists, then it should get on and recruit them.

5. And it was agreed that OMT would look after this project and then deal with the issue of how to sustain recruitment over the longer term.

Action Point 40 **Paul Davies to take forward the recommendations in the paper reporting to OMT on progress.**

2v Retirement Policy (Paper B/05/61)

2.18 Ian McConaghy introduced the paper by explaining that after the 1 October 2006 it would be illegal to have a compulsory retirement age of 60. The retirement age must be at least 65 although under the current Civil Service Pension Scheme people could still choose to go at 60. The date for HSE implementing the change to a retirement age of 65 was suggested as 1 April 2006.

2.19 During the course of a discussion, the Board agreed to the recommendations in the paper having being reassured that the financial position was satisfactory and to some clarification of the wording of when people could choose to go and the conditions under which they could stay if they wished to.

2.20 The Board also decided that it would move to the proposals in the paper from 1 January 2006.

2.21 The Board noted that these proposals for retirement did not apply to the Senior Civil Service, where no central decision had been taken.

Action Point 41 **Ian McConaghy to take forward the recommendations in the paper and would ensure that those people affected would be contacted personally and then would issue a global email to all staff on the Board's decision.**

3 Health and Safety (Paper B/05/71)

3.1 The Board discussed and noted the contents of the monthly health and safety report. HSE continued to make good progress on injury reduction, although the Board might need to discuss sickness absence at the Board's next meeting. It was also noted that the number of near miss reports had gone up. The Stress Working Group was now up and running under the aegis of the Corporate Health and Safety Committee and was chaired by Elizabeth Gynell.

3.2 The Board noted that the three-year strategy for health and safety and a paper on lone working would be discussed at the next meeting of the Board.

Action Point 42 **Justin McCracken to bring the papers on the three-year health and safety strategy & lone working to the next Board Meeting.**

4 Policy Issues – Energy Policy (Paper B/05/59)

4.1 Closed discussion.

5 **Managing Performance and Business Risk: Consideration of HSE's Balanced Scorecard and Corporate Risk Register (Paper B/05/70)**

- 5.1** In introducing the paper Vivienne Dews made the following points:
1. The Board were still struggling with the issue of how it measures performance.
 2. The current balanced scorecard is being reviewed and proposals will come to the January Board meeting.
 3. In the past the Board have concentrated on the data rather than make decisions on the basis of the balanced scorecard.
 4. There is still the residual issue of how the Board handles the balanced scorecard at the Board and how HSE ups its game as a delivery-focussed organisation.
- 5.2** Bill Tomkins introduced the paper further by pointing out that the degree of stability from the last quarter was good. There was some improvement in HSE's performance in stakeholder engagement. But there was still some inconsistency between the balanced scorecard and the risk register – for example, on efficiency savings.
- 5.3** Rather than having a detailed discussion on the data and the current balanced scorecard colours, the Board had a general discussion on the balanced scorecard during which the following points were made:
1. Business improvements and especially HSE's efficiency plan were key business risks.
 2. Workforce planning was also a key business risk because HSE cannot get the right people in the right place and the organisation is carrying or transferring vacancies.
 3. Leadership and internal communications are also key issues and these reinforce the staff survey results.
 4. Although the financial management and monitoring performance was green it was crucial that the forecasts for spend for the remainder of the year were accurate and realistic.

Action Point 45 **Vivienne Dews to bring forward a paper on development of the Balanced Scorecard to the next meeting of the Board.**

6 AOB

- 6.1** The Board discussed the draft agenda for January and made the following decisions:
1. The sensible risk paper would be delayed to February.
 2. The legal risk register paper that was below the line for the December meeting would be discussed at the January meeting.
 3. There would be an update on pay.
 4. There would be a follow-up to the discussion on the staff survey and a discussion on HSE's values and on the 24 January Senior Civil Service Leadership Meeting.
 5. There would be a lunch with the HSE people who lead in the contacts with corporate stakeholders.
 6. The meeting would go from 9.30-1.00.

Action Point 46 **Peter Buckley to revise the draft agenda and to commission relevant papers etc.**

- 6.2** Vivienne Dews would send round HSE's existing rules on global email

messages to remind Board members what they were.

Action Point 47 Vivienne Dews to circulate the rules on global emails to all Board Members.

6.3 On meetings of the Board in locations other than London, the Board agreed to do four meetings next year out of London, with 2 of those in Bootle. And that lunches with representative samples of staff for the meetings in both London and Bootle would also be arranged.

Action Point 48 Peter Buckley to advise the Board of revised meeting locations for 2006 and to organise lunches with staff at more meetings.

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