

**HEALTH AND SAFETY EXECUTIVE  
OFFSHORE INDUSTRY ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
HELICOPTER LIAISON GROUP**

**Minutes of the meeting held on 4 June 2008, HSE, Rose Court,  
London SE1**

**Present**

**Representing**

Chair:	Mike Lunt	HSE
Members:	Robert Paterson	Oil & Gas UK
	John Monaghan	HCA
	Mike Crabb	HCA
	Kevin Payne	CAA
	Dave Howson	CAA
	Rab Wilson	Unite, Amicus Section
	John Monks	IADC
	Ian Evans	BROA
Secretary:	Phil Sumner	HSE

**Item 1 – Introduction/Apologies**

1. Apologies had been tendered by Steve Walker (HSE), John Taylor (Unite, TGWU Section), Peter Norton (BHAB), and Phil Wiggs (IMCA). The Chairman welcomed Robert Paterson who was replacing Brian Teeder as representative for Oil & Gas UK.

**Item 2 – Status of matters arising from minutes of previous meeting**

**ACTION 1: HSE to reconsider its instructions to inspectors on duty holder arrangements for helideck netting testing in the light of feedback from ASTG and implementation of joint industry guidance.**

Action would be subject to duty holders' responses to HSE's proposed letter concerning implementation of the joint industry guidance on the testing of helideck perimeter safety nets (to be discussed under agenda Item 3). **ACTION ONGOING**

**ACTION 2: HSE (Mike Lunt) to reconsider the requirement for audit arrangements in Chapter 4.2.2.2 of the revised Helideck Design Guidelines. ACTION DISCHARGED**

### **Item 3 – Helideck netting issues**

2. Mike Lunt circulated the text of a draft letter HSE was proposing to send to all duty holders, copied to industry associations and verification bodies, seeking confirmation that the actions required by the Guidance issued by Oil & Gas UK (Helideck Perimeter Safety nets – Issue 2) [HEL05.pdf](#) was being complied with. He advised that the letter would also seek confirmation from duty holders regarding actions required by HSE Safety Notice 2/2004 [http://www.hse.gov.uk/offshore/notices/sn\\_02\\_04.htm](http://www.hse.gov.uk/offshore/notices/sn_02_04.htm) in respect of the annual testing of helideck fire-fighting foam production systems. The purpose of the letter was to get a clearer overall picture of the extent of conformance with both documents and assist in focussing future inspections by HSE. Members supported this initiative and considered that the letter should be directed at senior level within duty holders' organisations to ensure that the requirement for testing and maintaining test records is incorporated in company procedures.

### **Item 4 – Helicopter/helideck issues at normally unattended installations**

3. Robert Paterson advised of a meeting he was chairing that afternoon involving industry representatives, CAA, HCA and HSE intended to gain a better understanding about the adequacy of rescue and firefighting provisions (RFF) on UKCS NUIs. These discussions would contribute to revision of Chapter 10 of the existing guidance issued by Oil & Gas UK covering helideck management.

4. Mike Lunt briefed members on an initial meeting which had recently taken place chaired by the Energy Institute and attended by industry representatives and HSE to produce a scope of work for the development of guidelines for NUI design and operation. The discussions on RFF would need to feed into these guidelines. It had been agreed that the Group should meet again as soon as practicable to discuss the draft NUI guidance document which had already been prepared by a duty holder should that duty holder be willing for it to be made available as an industry document.

5. Mike Lunt reported that HSE was also taking forward a range of issues concerning NUI facilities which HSE inspectors felt it timely to reassess.

### **Item 5 – BALPA complaint about rescue and recovery arrangements and request for membership of HLG**

6. Mike Lunt advised HLG of concerns raised by the British Air Line Pilots' Association (BALPA) earlier this year about its helicopter pilots being asked by certain SNS operators to fly to installations when the sea state was such that mechanical recovery using the Dacon Scoop was the only rescue option. He pointed out that although offshore evacuation, escape and rescue was outside the Group's remit, this issue had acted as a catalyst in BALPA's formal request to be represented on HLG.

7. In discussion, it was felt that the experience of BALPA members in helicopter operations offshore would provide useful input to HLG's deliberations and it was agreed to recommend that OIAC support BALPA's request. **POST MEETING NOTE:**

**OIAC agreed that BALPA should be represented on HLG at its meeting on 20 June 2008.**

#### **Item 6 - Update of the Offshore Helideck Design Guide**

8. The Chairman and Kevin Payne summarised the present state of the review of the Guide being undertaken by HSE and CAA, noting that Chapters 1 – 8 had already been presented to members for comments. Kevin Payne pointed out that he was not intending to progress his review of the technical content of the remaining Chapters pending the outcome of the current update of CAP 437 and the need to avoid duplicating the content of CAP 437 in the Design Guide.

9. Robert Paterson suggested that, given the primacy of CAP437 and the Oil & Gas UK Guidelines covering offshore helideck management, consideration should be given to distilling key parts from the Design Guide and incorporating them into either document as appropriate. He acknowledged that this would have a fundamental bearing on the future relevance of the Guide. The Chairman accordingly invited members' views on the future of the Guide. In discussion, this alternative approach was supported as summarised as follows;

- No further work to review the Design Guide should be undertaken and an updated version of the document should **NOT** be published.
- Work should be set in hand to identify those key elements in the Design Guide needing to be incorporated in either CAP 437, or Oil & Gas UK Guidelines on the Management of Offshore Helidecks as appropriate.

Summarising the discussion, the Chairman identified the following action as necessary;

**ACTION 1: HSE to organise discussions with CAA and Oil & Gas UK to identify those elements within the Design Guide to be incorporated in CAP 437 or the Management of Offshore Helidecks, as appropriate, keeping HLG informed of progress.**

**POST MEETING NOTE: Following discussions with Oil & Gas UK and CAA, CAA has advised that, on reflection, it would be very difficult to subsume key elements from the Design Guide into the 6<sup>th</sup> edition of CAP 437 without also recirculating CAP 437 chapter documents to industry and so risk significantly delaying its publication. It is therefore proposed to continue discussions on the future of the Design Guide at HLG's next meeting on the basis of work undertaken under ACTION 1 but in the meantime review the outstanding technical chapters of the Guide.**

#### **Item 7 – CAP 437 (6<sup>th</sup> Edition) amendment – update**

10. Kevin Payne advised that it was CAA's policy to review CAP 437 on a three yearly basis in view of the amount of new material needing to be incorporated. In particular, recent changes to ICAO Annex 14 Vol.2 material would need to be covered. A review leading to issue of the 6<sup>th</sup> Edition in the 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter of 2008 was currently in progress and a letter setting out the proposed amendments had been

circulated to industry, seeking its comments by 18 July 2008. The main changes were outlined to members. These included a new section addressing the design requirements relating to winching area platforms located on offshore and onshore wind turbines.

#### **Item 8 – HSE offshore helideck inspection programme**

11. Mike Lunt advised that HSE's offshore helideck inspection programme for 2008/09 was in the process of being developed in collaboration with OSD's Inspection Management Teams. This would involve visits to approximately eight helidecks on different installation types. Safety representatives would be consulted as part of each inspection. It was also important to obtain views of the respective verification bodies. An interim report on the issues arising would be provided to HLG's next meeting.

#### **Item 9 – Feedback from HCA helideck inspection programme**

12. John Monaghan provided a report on the results of HCA's recent survey of the views of helicopter pilots about the state of helidecks. Data had been collected on responses to a set of ten questions and would be input into a database which would be distributed to helicopter operators. The overall conclusion was that standards had improved.


#### **Item 10 – L15 – Phillips moonlight 'bird friendly' [blue-green] platform lighting**

13. Kevin Payne reported that the L15 installation in the Dutch sector had been fitted with blue – green platform lighting on a trial basis in response to environmental concerns arising from research which suggested that migrating birds were disturbed by the 'red' content of installation lighting. The feeling within the aviation community was that blue – green installation lighting would significantly reduce the effectiveness of the green helideck perimeter lighting which had been introduced as a new ICAO standard in 2004, mandatory from 1 January 2009, precisely to address the present lack of conspicuity. A further trial to investigate the impact of the 'bird friendly' installation lighting on green helideck perimeter lighting is planned for 2009. Other means of addressing the problem such as shielding and/or filtering the installation lighting have been suggested.

#### **Item 11- International Helicopter Safety Team**

14. Deferred to the next meeting.

#### **Item 12 – Helideck status lights update**

15. Dave Howson referred members to draft [CAA Paper 2008/01 – Specification for an Offshore Helideck Status Light System](#)  (copy attached, together with News Update on the IMT Heli-Deck Status Light System), explaining that the main change to the system published in 2003 involved the flashing light test procedure – this was documented in NPL's report at Appendix C.

### **Item 13 – Research update**

16. Dave Howson circulated copies of his written brief showing the current status of helicopter safety research projects under the joint industry HSRMC programme. A brief summary was provided. ([A copy of the update is attached.](#))

### **Item 14 – identify AOB**

17. Dave Howson reported that CAA's Directorate of Aerospace Policy was currently conducting a review of the issues associated with the content, accuracy, timeliness and distribution of weather observations from offshore structures. Further discussions would be taking place with the operators, oil and gas companies and other interested parties over the next few months in order to fully understand the industry's requirements and to determine how best the UK might address the ICAO requirements (at present UK practices differ with ICAO with respect to meteorological observations from offshore platforms against the recommended practices in ICAO Annex 3 (Meteorological Service for International Air Navigation)).

### **Item 15 – Date of next meeting**

It was agreed to change the date of the next meeting from 26 to 27 November 2008, the venue remaining HSE London. Members also agreed in future to try to align the timing of HLG meetings with those of ASTG in order to minimise the amount of travelling for those attending both meetings.

**POST MEETING NOTE: The meeting will now be held at the offices of the International Marine Contractors Association (IMCA), 5, Lower Belgrave Street, London SW1.**

### **ACTION ARISING FROM HLG MEETING HELD ON 4 JUNE 2008**

**ACTION 1: HSE to organise discussions with CAA and Oil & Gas UK to identify those elements within the Offshore Helideck Design Guide to be incorporated in CAP 437 or the Management of Offshore Helidecks, as appropriate, keeping HLG informed of progress.**