

## **Minutes of the HSENI Senior Management Team (SMT) Meeting Wednesday 19 January 2011, Ladas Drive Belfast**

**In attendance J Keyes (Chair)  
D Breen  
K Toner  
B Monson**

### **1. Apologies** None

**2. Minutes of last meeting** – The minutes of the last meeting held on 30 November 2010 which had been previously circulated were approved and adopted.

### **3. Update on Agreed Action Points**

- Fire Surveyor Report recommendations are being implemented.
- Estimated budgets being drawn up iro Operating Plan 2011/12.
- All selected staff have participated fully in the IiP “health check”.
- PPSNI/HSENI SLA being finalised.
- Child Farm Safety calendar launched 10 December.
- Dr Monson will provide leadership for the “Maintenance” priority.
- Strategy Working Group met on 10 December to plan launch event.
- Response to the Lord Chief Justice’s office consultation on a priority list for sentencing guidelines issued 8 December.
- Contribution made to DETI staff brief.

### **4. Corporate Health, Safety and Welfare**

Mr Keyes reported that he had lead a health, safety and welfare inspection of Ladas Drive on 10 January. This again revealed a pressing need for additional storage space. It was felt that additional storage space could be created by re-modelling the current server room where free space has been created with the removal of redundant server racking.

**Action: Premises Officer to create additional storage space within the server room. Mr Breen**

Dr Monson confirmed that the next inspection of Longbridge was planned for 31 January 2011. He would undertake this along with the local NIPSA safety representative Sam Andrews and the premises officer John Wilson. The inspection will embrace all tenants.

Dr Monson reported that further investigation of the heating system at Longbridge had identified problems with the hot air ducting. These have been rectified with positive results.

Mr Breen reported that there were no reportable incidents in the previous month.

## **5. Audit, Risk Management and Finance**

Mr Breen reported that the bulk of the 2010 Internal Audit (IA) fieldwork had been completed during November and December. Mr Keyes indicated that he had provided an update on the audit fieldwork to the Audit and Risk Management Committee at its meeting on 6 January. He informed the committee that finalised reports would be available for its consideration at the April meeting. Mr Keyes also reported that the committee members were keen to participate in the formulation of the next strategic audit plan which would be considered for endorsement at the next ARMC meeting in April 2011.

### **Action: Arrange meeting between internal auditors and the members of the ARMC and HSENI staff to draw up strategic audit plan. Mr Breen**

Mr Breen reported that HSENI had met with the NIAO external auditors on 17 January to agree an audit plan and timetable.

Mr Breen introduced the Risk Register for the period ending 31 December 2010 (3rd quarter). He had previously reviewed this with Mr Keyes and was able to confirm that no new risks had been identified in the last quarter and that no risks crystallised. It was acknowledged that all possible steps were being taken to manage risk.

In addition the Quarterly Assurance Statement was considered. This confirmed that there were no significant issues concerning internal control or data security.

Mr Breen indicated that consideration will need to be given to the model Management Statement and Financial Memorandum (MSFM) recently issued by DFP when HSENI's MSFM comes up for review in 2011/12.

On finance Mr Breen again reported that the DRC budget was projected to come in on target with 70% of budget having been expended by end of December 2010. The Programme budget continued to demonstrate end loading as in previous years. In this case it is anticipated that 70% of the budget will have been expended by the end of January 2011.

Mr Keyes reported that DETI had published for public consultation a draft budget for the period 2011/15 which includes HSENI's allocation.

In addition HSENI has been asked for details of how it proposes to use those resources allocated under the draft budget.

## **6. HR**

Mr Breen reported that during November, 11 staff were absent for a total of 112.7 days which equates to an absence rate of 4.2%. The comparison absence rate for the NICS for November 4.2% and for DETI 3.5%.

Mr Keyes sought confirmation that the scale of the absence rate was due to a small number of staff being on long term sickness absence associated with major health issues. Mr Breen confirmed that this was the case and that the figures did not indicate any underlying absence management issues. Indeed the percentage of staff at work over the period was 91.5%%.

Mr Breen reported that there was still 1 unfilled vacancy that of the Workplace Health Nurse. It was agreed that further consideration needs to be given as to how the functions of this post may be discharged. He also reported that a trainee inspector had tendered her resignation to take up a post in the private sector. It was agreed that HSENI would not pursue filling this vacancy given the present constraint on public expenditure.

It was recognised that this departure would have implications for the delivery of Workplace Health projects. To that end it was agreed that consideration would be given to providing support from Compliance Division.

**Action: Consider the provision of support to assist in the delivery of Workplace Health projects. Dr Monson/Mr Toner**

Mr Breen confirmed that DETI's Business Improvement Team was undertaking a BIT assessment of the Gas Safety Compliance Officer post.

He also confirmed that John Mulholland had completed his IiP health check and should issue his report in the near future. He has indicated that HSENI is well placed to go forward for IiP re-accreditation.

Mr Toner raised the issue of term time applications. It was agreed that every effort would be made to accommodate all applications on the understanding that colleagues continued to approach this in a co-operative fashion as in previous years.

## **7. Case and Project Work**

Mr Toner provided an updated table showing the current caseload of the Major Investigation Team (MIT). Out of the 32 cases, 13 cases were currently being investigated, while the remainder were either with the PPSNI (6 cases) or in the court system (13 cases). Mr Toner gave an assurance that having reviewed the caseload with the Head of the MIT that the current workload of MIT was manageable.

Mr Keyes referred to the positive meeting he had had with senior officials with the PPSNI which seem to point to a resolution of outstanding issues and the prospect of closure on the Service Level Agreement (SLA).

**Action: Follow up with the PPSNI to secure its agreement to finalise and sign off on a SLA. Mr Toner**

Mr Keyes confirmed that a student accommodation focused carbon monoxide initiative was being planned for February and March. This will see HSENI staff visit student houses and flats across Northern Ireland and challenge students on their awareness of gas safety and the risk from carbon monoxide. In addition HSENI will also provide where necessary free of charge carbon monoxide alarms.

**Action: Ensure initiative receives appropriate publicity and manpower support from across HSENI. Mr Toner**

Mr Toner reported that HSENI was sign-posting a HSE GB safety notice in regard to scissor lifts.

He also drew attention to a forthcoming campaign that will focus on the safety of older farmers that would make use of both press and radio. Mr Keyes indicated that this was timely given the fact that since the beginning of the year two older farmers have died as a result of incidents on farms whilst working with livestock.

**Action: Finalise and agree the shape and scope of the campaign. Mr Toner**

Dr Monson reported that considerable progress has been made in dealing with First Aid at Work training approvals but that negotiation and further work was required between HSE and HSENI around the administration of the Emergency First Aid at Work training providers.

He also indicated that phase 2 of the Asbestos Duty Holders campaign was about to get underway with a mail shot to some 56,000

commercial premises across Northern Ireland. This will provide landlords and those in charge of premises with information as to how they can meet their statutory obligations and advising them of a follow up inspection initiative by HSENI and the District Councils.

Dr Monson then mentioned HSENI's participation on a UK wide committees considering the prevention of outbreaks of E.coli infections.

This committee was working towards producing up to date guidance for use by open farms, zoos etc. Locally there was ongoing liaison with Local Councils, DHSSPS and DARD.

Dr Monson also referred to:

- (i) A future meeting regarding the registration of electrical contractors. On this Mr Toner referred to a recent meeting with the Commission for Energy Regulation (CER) in the Republic of Ireland and its role in the registration of electrical contractors and its interest in NI/UK schemes.

**Action: Follow up with CER regarding registration of electrical contractors.**

**Dr Monson**

- (ii) Disturbing upward trend of major and 3 day RIDDOR reports for the Health sector.
- (iii) Ongoing UKAS re-accreditation of HSENI's in-house laboratory.
- (iv) Recognition of an excellent case study on managing work related stress.

Mr Keyes thanked Mr Toner and Dr Monson for these reports which reflected well on the hard work and commitment of HSENI's staff.

## **8. Business Planning**

Mr Keyes reported that it had been necessary to activate the HSENI Business Continuity Plan as a consequence of the recent rotational restriction on water supplies which had meant no drinking water and inoperable toilets at Ladas Drive. This activation covered the period from the 29 to the 31 December and resulted in Ladas Drive operating only with a skeleton staff. Mr Keyes paid credit to those members of staff who provided cover over this period.

The SMT considered the quarterly BCP report and agreed its contents. They also acknowledged that planning was well advanced to hold a desk top BCP exercise on 8 March 2011. Additionally it was noted that the annual contingency test of HSENI's core IT applications carried out in December demonstrated that if faced with complete loss HSENI's core applications could be recovered in one hour.

Mr Breen confirmed that the new Regional Health and Safety Strategy would be launched on 17 February 2011 at an event at Newtownabbey Borough Council Offices and that both the Corporate Plan and Operating Plan would be finalised once future budgets were confirmed. As part of this finalisation of plans, bilaterals will be held with all HOGs during February.

Dr Monson indicated that steady progress was being made to finalise the allocation of specialisms across HSENI professional/technical staff.

**Action: Bring forward for consideration by the SMT a paper dealing with the allocation of specialisms. Dr Monson/Mr Toner**

## **9. Performance Monitoring**

Mr Toner provided an inspection outturn for the quarter ending 31 December 2010. This showed a total of 4883 inspections of which 898 were gas safety inspections. On this evidence and on the basis of future work planning SMT was confident that the annual inspections targets would be met.

Mr Keyes indicated that having accurate information on CMS was vital to ensuring HSENI can provide up to date and meaningful statistics and appropriate case histories. To that end he encouraged Heads of Division to revisit this with HOGs.

**Action: Ensure timely inputting of accurate information on CMS. All HODs**

## **10. Board Business**

Mr Keyes confirmed that following a public appointments process Mr George Lucas had been appointed as the Chairman Designate. He will shadow the current Chairman until 31 March 2011 when he fully assumes the role. As part of his induction he will be afforded the opportunity to attend briefings by the SMT on the work undertaken by HSENI. He will also participate in the "On Board" training course.

**Action: Arrange briefing for Chairman Designate. Mr Keyes**

Mr Keyes indicated that Board members have expressed an interest in accompanying field staff on visits to gain an appreciation of the breath of the work undertaken by HSENI staff and of the many and varied circumstances they encounter in delivering the service.

In discussion it was agreed that this exercise would embrace all field

staff namely inspectors, compliance officers and business advisors.

**Action: Arrange programme of joint visits for Board Members.  
Mr Keyes**

## **11. A.O.B.**

### **(i) Assembly Elections**

Mr Keyes drew the meeting's attention to the recent memo from the Departmental Assembly Liaison Officer concerning the 2011 Assembly Elections and asked colleagues to be mindful of the impact this might have on HSENI discharging business that relies on Assembly involvement.

### **(ii) Article 30 Bar**

Mr Breen indicated that progress was being made to remove the Article 30 bar on disclosure. It was agreed that consideration be given to briefing staff on the implications of this change.

**Action: Arrange a briefing session for staff on the implications of removing the Article 30 bar on disclosure.  
Mr Breen**

### **(iii) RIDDOR amendments**

Mr Breen reported that HSENI in line with developments in GB would be moving to consult on increasing the reporting period from 3 days to 7 days for non major injuries.

### **(iv) Wave Energy Project**

Mr Breen reported that the SIB was seeking a HSENI nominee to sit on a project committee to consider the implications of NI becoming a focus for the development and exploitation of wave energy. In discussion it was agreed that John Wright would be HSENI's nominee.

**Action: Confirm with SIB the name of HSENI's nominee.  
Mr Breen**

### **(v) ID cards**

Mr Toner asked if the HSENI ID cards currently being developed could be distributed in time for the Student CO campaign.

**Action: Arrange for the distribution of ID cards to field staff. Mr Breen**

### **(vi) Handling Complaints about Unsafe/Unhealthy Workplaces**

Mr Toner asked if a briefing session could be held for field staff on the updated procedures for dealing with complaints.

**Action: Organise a briefing session of HSENI complaints handling procedures. Mr Toner**

**Date of next meeting**

It was agreed that the next SMT meeting would be on 8 February 2011 at 9.30am Ladas Drive.