

**Minutes of the HSENI Senior Management Team (SMT) Meeting
Thursday 10 June 2010, Robens Room, Ladas Drive**

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 6 May 2010 which had been previously circulated were approved and adopted.

3. Update on Agreed Action Points

- Meeting has been arranged on 16 June to review the Risk Register
- Briefing on economic appraisal was provided at Compliance Division event
- Active consideration is being given to initiating a trainee inspector competition
- HSENI representatives spoke at a recent NICICTU Health and Safety Committee meeting on asbestos.
- Sectoral statistics were provided at the corporate plan scoping event.
- Inspection and enforcement activity figures have been finalised for 2009/10.

4. Corporate Health, Safety and Welfare

Mr Keyes reported that he has led a health, safety and welfare inspection of Ladas Drive on 1 June. There were no significant issues although it was considered advisable that the personal safety alarm infrastructure for both the interview room and reception area should be amalgamated.

Action: Extend the interview room alarm system to embrace the reception area. Mr Breen

Mr Keyes welcomed the introduction of the comprehensive office waste recycling system and hoped that everyone would make full use of it.

Dr Monson indicated that some revision of HSENI's Health and Safety policy may be needed in regard to electrical testing by inspectors.

Action: Ensure appropriate amendments made to HSENI's Health and Safety policy as regards electrical testing by inspectors. Dr Monson

Mr Breen reported that one incident had occurred during the period involving staff. The injury sustained was a cut to the hand whilst using a knife to shape polystyrene packing for a battery case.

5. Audit, Risk Management and Finance

Mr Keyes reported that there had been a productive meeting with the NIAO on 25 May 2010 based around clarification of HSENI comments on the revised second draft and the subsequent responses by the NIAO. NIAO indicated it was still its intention to publish its VFM report by the early summer.

Mr Breen confirmed that HSENI was providing certain data sets as part of the National Fraud Initiative. He also indicated that HSENI has been given an indication that it might be part of a new audit initiative by the NIAO to look at examples of good practice in risk management.

Mr Keyes inquired if the draft accounts for 2009/10 would be available for consideration by the Audit and Risk Management Committee at its next meeting on 24 June 2010. Mr Breen indicated that recent contact with Moore Stephens/NIAO indicated that there was every likelihood that this would be the case but that it might be a close run thing.

Mr Breen advised the meeting that PwC had produced a draft internal audit plan for 2010/11 that would cover five business areas namely:-
(i) Inspection and Enforcement (ii) Workplace Health Support/EMAS/Scientific Services (iii) Purchasing (iv) Fixed Assets and (v) Legislation.

Mr Breen confirmed that HSENI's budget for 2010/11 had been confirmed at £6.524 million of which £1.1m was for programme activity. In regard to the latter he emphasised the critical importance of budget holders completing economic appraisals and purchase orders.

Action: Ensure all Divisional budget holders complete in a timely fashion both economic appraisals and purchase orders for all expenditure items All

Mr Breen confirmed that HSENI had contributed to June monitoring. A modest £33k had been sought to cover £5k capital spend in regard to the laboratory and £28k to cover premises costs associated with Longbridge House.

It was also noted that HSENI was taking steps to secure funding for an Employment Medical Advisor.

Finally Mr Breen indicated that it was likely that HSENI would be asked to contribute to an options for reduction exercise planned for the end of June.

6. HR

Mr Breen reported that during March 7 staff were absent for a total of 37 days which equates to an absence rate of 1.4% and a cost of £6,866 and for April 3 staff were absent for a total of 27 days which equates to an absence rate of 1.1% and a cost of £5,669. The comparison absence rates for DETI and NICS where 2.9% and 4.3% for March and 3.7% and 3.9% for April.

Mr Keyes again sought assurance that these figures did not indicate any underlying absence management issues. Mr Breen confirmed that this was the case. He also confirmed that no warnings were issued in the period in question.

Mr Keyes reported that he had spoken at a NICS Employee Engagement Workshop on the 3 June. He had been invited to speak by the Head of the Civil Service Bruce Robinson on foot of the excellent results achieved by HSENI in the 2009 NICS Staff Attitude Survey. HSENI achieved an employee engagement index score of 69.7% compared the NICS average of 46.5%. which underpins the consistently lower sickness absence rate compared to the NICS.

Mr Breen updated the meeting on the current vacancies of which there are seven. Interviews for three of these viz Assistant Scientific Officer Physiotherapist and Compliance Officer have been completed and work is progressing to place the successful candidates. It is expected that interviews for the Workplace Health Nurse will take place in the autumn. In addition work is underway to fill an EO2 post and 2 AO posts from Departmental "pools".

In addition he reported that there had been a large response to the advert placed for the Partnership Liaison Officer who, although will be employed by Castlereagh District Council, will be based at HSENI's HQ.

Finally it was confirmed that the Vetting and Barring Scheme aimed at safeguarding vulnerable groups would not apply to HSENI field staff such as inspectors as their contact with vulnerable groups such as school children is not classified as frequent as defined under the Scheme.

In general discussion it was acknowledged that pending future staff changes it would be prudent to review current allocations and to that end it was agreed that the SMT would convene a separate meeting to review manpower planning and the allocation of specialisms.

**Action: Organise a manpower planning/specialisms meeting.
Mr Keyes**

7. Case and Project Work

Mr Toner shared an updated table showing the state of play of current MIT investigations. These totalled 32 of which 20 were either with the PPSNI or in the court system. He gave an assurance that the current workload of MIT was manageable.

He reported that two prosecutions had been completed during May. On 18 May McShane Packaging Ltd were fined £4,000 with £2,000 costs after pleading guilty to breaches arising from an incident when an employee was trapped by the moving parts of a machine resulting in the amputation of his left arm above the elbow.

In the second case Fernwave Limited pleaded guilty on 24 May to breaches arising from an incident in which an employee fell 10 metres and died as a result of his injuries. The company was fined £30,000.

Mr Toner then reported that DHSSPS had taken on board HSENI's suggestion that Health Visitors inquire and assess the safety of young children living on farms as part of their visitation programme. This will be enshrined in the update of the Child Health Promotion Programme "Healthy Child Healthy Future".

Mr Keyes welcomed this news and was sure that it would underpin and complement the work undertaken by HSENI as part of the Child Safety on Farms Campaign.

Finally Mr Toner mentioned that publication of the DoE Planning Service document PPS21 concerning rural development which contains the requirement for farmers to seek HSENI approval to relocate dwellings and other farm buildings. It was agreed that HSENI had no vires in these matters and that DoE should be so advised.

Action: Advise DoE Planning Service that HSENI is not empowered to discharge a dwelling/farm building relocation approval scheme. Mr Toner

Dr Monson then advised the meeting on the status of a range of projects:-

- (i) An Ecoli Open Farms initiative is underway
- (ii) The Asbestos duty campaign is underway
- (iii) HSENI will participate in an "AgendaNI" round table discussion that will form the basis of a future feature in the magazine on health and wellbeing.

He also confirmed that at the last meeting of the Workplace Health Steering Group it was agreed that it would be disbanded in favour of the broad workplace health agenda being taken forward by a new inter-departmental group that will embrace both welfare reform and the recommendations from the Dame Carol Black review. HSENI has representation on the new group.

Mr Keyes indicated that he wished to formally record his appreciation of the contribution of the members of the Steering Group since its inception and was sure that the foundations it has laid down will contribute significantly to the future work of the new inter-departmental group.

8. Business Planning

Mr Breen reported there had been a very successful corporate plan scoping event held on 18 May. The outcomes of this were helping inform the drafting of the corporate plan. It was agreed that aspects of the corporate plan could be usefully developed by members of the senior management team.

Action: Corporate Plan template to be issued indicating specific drafters. Mr Breen

He also indicated that the draft strategy had been submitted for Ministerial approval and for forward transmission to the ETI committee for its consideration.

9. Performance Monitoring

Mr Toner reported that as of 8 June 2010 there had been 854 inspections and 197 gas inspections. It was agreed that at this early stage in the year it was too early to certain of final outturn. That said it was acknowledged that this was an impressive start for inspections.

10. Board Business

Mr Keyes reported that the advertisement for a new Chairman had appeared in the press on 3 and 4 June with a closing date for applications of 30 June. He indicated that any inquiries should be diverted to DETI Public Appointments Unit who was handling this exercise.

Mr Keyes indicated that the next Board meeting would be held on 30 June to specifically approve the draft accounts.

11. A.O.B.

- (i) **Nuclear Safety Directive**
Mr Breen indicated that HSENI was in discussion with HSEGB about the application of this EU directive to NI.
- (ii) **Industrial Use of Explosives**
Dr Monson indicated that discussions were continuing with the DoJ as to ownership of enforcement responsibilities.
- (iii) **Risk Assessments – Prisons**
Dr Monson indicated that a position paper had been prepared on Risk Assessment and Staffing levels. This will be shared with the prison management and the POA.
- (iv) **Planning and Development Group**
Mr Toner indicated that he and Dr Monson had attended a meeting of the above group and found it helpful in identifying a number of areas for joint working with the District Councils.

12. Date of next meeting

It was agreed the next SMT meeting would be on 19 July at 9-30am.