

**Minutes of the HSENI Senior Management Team (SMT) Meeting
Thursday 6 May 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 25 March 2010 which had been previously circulated were approved and adopted.

3. Update on Agreed Action Points

- Staff focus groups were held on 30 and 31 March.
- Comments on the revised second draft of the NIAO VFM report were forwarded to DETI on 30 March 2010.
- Quarterly Assurance Statement forwarded to DETI.
- Economic appraisals for all expenditure incurred in 2010/11 – ongoing.

4. Corporate Health, Safety and Welfare

Mr Keyes welcomed the mental health wellbeing briefing being planned for all staff on 10 May. He indicated that this would align well with the current work associated with the stress survey and focus groups that will eventually see the implementation of the stress survey report by the Continuous Improvement Team.

Mr Keyes acknowledged the introduction of a new electronic visitor pass system that would assist with evacuation and head count procedures.

Finally Mr Breen reported that no reportable incidents occurred during the period involving staff. He went on to say that in 2009/10 there had only been one minor incident reported in which a member of staff suffered an abrasion to the leg that required first aid treatment.

5. Audit, Risk Management and Finance

Mr Keyes reported the NIAO had attended the HSENI Audit and Risk Management Committee (ARMC) on 13 April to report on the progress of its VFM report. NIAO indicated that it hoped to publish a final report in the early summer. He went on to say that a meeting had taken place with DETI on 23 April at which HSENI's response was finalised. This has now been forwarded by the DETI Permanent Secretary to the NIAO.

Mr Keyes also reported that at the ARMC meeting PwC had presented its 2009/10 internal audit findings. PwC had given an overall substantial assurance rating and had following a review of management responses to its recommendations had also given a substantial assurance rating to the six areas considered namely :- (i) Corporate Governance (ii) Personnel and Training (iii) IT systems (iv) Payroll , Pensions and Travel Expenses (v) HSWNI and (vi) Information and Advisory Services.

The SMT recognised the significance of these ratings and how they reflect the effort and commitment of staff.

Mr Keyes reported that the ARMC reviewed the Risk Register and accepted management assurances that no new risks had been identified, that no risks had crystallised and that adequate measures were being taken to manage the risks.

Mr Keyes indicated that in light of recent discussions at Board level it was decided to review the current risk register to ascertain whether the risks identified were still valid. It was agreed that a meeting would be convened involving the SMT and other key staff to review the risk register.

Action: Convene meeting to review Risk Register. Mr Keyes

Mr Breen confirmed that the NIAO external audit of HSENI accounts was currently underway. This was as last year being undertaken by Moore Stephens. Mr Breen then introduced the draft financial statements for 2009/10 that had been prepared for audit by Moore Stephens. These were considered and adopted.

Mr Breen confirmed the final outturn for the combined DRC and Programme budgets in 2009/10 was an underspend equating to 0.38% of the total funding available.

Mr Keyes acknowledged this satisfactory outcome and the hard work of staff in ensuring the prudent stewardship of public monies.

Mr Breen also confirmed that the new IT accounting system Nav was fully installed and operational.

Finally Mr Toner indicated that his Division would benefit from an update on the completion of economic appraisals and asked if this could be accommodated at his Divisional meeting planned for 26 May at Loughry College Cookstown.

Action: Organise a briefing on economic appraisal for Compliance Division. Mr Toner /Mr Breen

6. HR

Mr Breen reported that during February 7 staff were absent for a total of 53 days which equates to an absence rate of 2.3% and a cost of £8,226 and for March 7 staff were absent for a total of 36 days which equates to an absence rate of 1.4% and a cost of £6866.

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.

It was noted that HSENI's absence rate of 2.3% for February and 1.4% for March compared favourably with DETI's at 2.9%/2.9% and the NICS rate of 4.4%/4.3% respectively.

Mr Breen updated the meeting on the current vacancies of which there are six. Interviews for three of these viz Assistant Scientific Officer, Physiotherapist and Compliance Officer will take place during May whilst an advert will appear in the press for a Workplace Health Nurse. In addition work is underway to fill an EO2 post (EMAS) and an AO post (HSWNI) from Departmental "pools".

Dr Monson confirmed that there would be a vacancy at Principal Inspector level in the very near future. Mr Toner also confirmed that an inspector was due to retire before the autumn.

In light of this it was agreed that steps would be taken to initiate a trainee inspector competition.

Action. Initiate a trainee inspector competition. Mr Breen

Dr Monson indicated that relocation to Longbridge House was underway and should be completed by 7 May. Mr Breen sought approval to proceed to contract a security company to open and close the building. This was agreed.

Mr Breen confirmed that the minor building works were now complete at the Lancer Building.

Mr Breen introduced the Training Report for 2009/10 and highlighted the fact that some £175,000 had been spent on training and development representing just over 4% of payroll and accounting for over a thousand training days. The SMT recognised both the investment in time and money this represented as well as the enormous benefit both personally for staff and corporately for HSENI.

7. Case and Project Work

Mr Toner tabled an updated table showing the state of play of all current MIT investigations. These totalled 33 of which 18 were either with the PPSNI or in the court system. He gave an assurance that the current workload of MIT was manageable.

Mr Toner reported that it had still not been possible to sign off on the SLA with the PPSNI as the issue of file submission times had still not been agreed. He indicated that HSENI would continue to pursue a satisfactory resolution to this issue.

He reported that one prosecution had been completed since the last meeting. This was against F G Wilson (Engineering) Ltd Larne who was fined £90,000 plus costs after pleading guilty.

He also reported that following appeal hearings the Industrial Tribunals affirmed the prohibition notices served on Bridge Line Demolition Ltd; Bridgeline Environmental Services Ltd and CWT Asbestos and Demolition Ltd. Mr Keyes inquired if HSENI was pursuing the recovery of costs. Mr Toner confirmed that this was the case.

Finally Mr Toner reported that an idea to hold a joint North South Quarry Safety Conference was gaining consensus. In discussion it was agreed that HSENI should support this as a pilot only in 2010/11 with no assurance that support would be forthcoming in 2011/12 and beyond. Mr Toner went on to say that recently there had been cross border working group meetings with the Health and Safety Authority concerning farm and construction safety.

Dr Monson reported that an analysis was underway of the research undertaken as to the level of understanding by landlords and those who manage property of their duties as regards asbestos. The outcome of this work will inform the shape and targets of a future campaign. He also indicated that the public sector was being dealt with separately given the special nature of its estate management.

Mr Toner mentioned that at the last Trade Union HSENI forum NICICTU requested that a representative of HSENI attend the June meeting of its Health and Safety Committee and brief them on asbestos.

Action: Arrange for HSENI representatives to speak to the NICICTU Health and Safety Committee on asbestos

Mr Toner/Dr Monson

Mr Breen confirmed that HSENI's new website would become operational in mid May once the on line form filling functionality was

completed by TIBUS.

Dr Monson confirmed that planning was underway for a MVR initiative as part of this year's SLIC campaign and that the manual handling in construction initiative was also being advanced.

8. Business Planning

Mr Breen reported that the draft Health and Safety Strategy had now almost completed its internal consultation phase. He was awaiting written comments from Board members. The next stage was to brief DETI before seeking the Minister's approval to pass the draft to the ETI committee for scrutiny. He indicated that the committee has allocated a slot on 17 June for consideration of the strategy. At this stage it is not known if they will hear oral evidence on that date.

Mr Breen confirmed that the 2010/11 Operating Plan had been published and that plans were well advanced to hold a scoping event for the Corporate Plan 2011/14 on 18 May.

Dr Monson felt that it might be helpful to inform the discussion on the 18 May if sectoral statistics were available drawn from CMS records.

Action: Prepare sectoral statistics for consideration at the Corporate Plan scoping event. Dr Monson

9. Performance Monitoring

Mr Toner reported that as of the 31 March 2010 there had overall been 7385 inspections that included gas safety inspections and inspections under the "help initiative" by trainees. This is a remarkable outturn when compared with the year's target of 5000. The SMT again recognised the considerable contribution to the figures brought about by the trainee inspectors who joined HSENI in March 2009 and the new gas safety unit. The SMT again acknowledged the effort of all field staff in achieving this significant result. In addition HSENI staff has served 101 prohibition notices and 72 improvement notices and dealt with 814 complaints about unsafe or unhealthy workplaces.

Action: To finalise inspection and enforcement activity figures for the 2009/10 Annual Report. Mr Toner

10. Board Business

Mr Keyes reported that at a recent meeting with DETI he was advised the advert for a new Chairman would appear in the press in early June with the aim of holding interviews in the autumn.

11. A.O.B.

- (i) Continuous Improvement Team**
Mr Breen raised the issue of field staff becoming members of the CIT and asked his fellow Divisional Heads to encourage participation.
- (ii) Familiarisation visits for Business Advisors**
Mr Breen asked if would be possible to arrange for newly appointed business advisors to accompany inspectors.
- (iii) Better Regulation Annual Report**
Mr Breen confirmed that HSENI has made a contribution to the DETI return on the Better Regulation Annual Report.
- (iv) Explosives**
Dr Monson reported that HSENI was in discussions with the new Department of Justice as to how the industrial use of explosives might be dealt with under the new arrangements.
- (v) Workplace Health**
Dr Monson indicated that the transition from the Workplace Health strategy to one based around the recommendations of the Dame Carol Black review was progressing.

12. Date of next meeting

It was agreed the next SMT meeting would be on 8 June at 9-30am.