

Minutes of the HSENI Senior Management Team (SMT) Meeting

18 March 2015, Ladas Drive, Belfast

In attendance: (Chair) K Morrison

B Monson

N Monson

1. Apologies

D Breen

2. Minutes of last meeting

The minutes of the last meeting held on 19 January which had been previously circulated were approved and adopted. There was no SMT meeting in February due to illness.

3. Update on Agreed Action Points

- **Mr Morrison will attend the next inspections at Ladas Drive and Longbridge House**
- **Mr Morrison met with DFP on 30 January to discuss the timing of the planned move from Longbridge House to Ladas Drive**

4. Corporate Health, Safety and Welfare

SMT noted no staff accidents or near misses reported since the last meeting in January. The last inspection of Ladas Drive / Omagh took place on 23 February. The last inspection of Longbridge House took place on 18 February. No significant issues were identified and any issues requiring follow up are in hand.

Dr Monson explained that, following recent surveys carried out at quarry sites, the guidance on PPE in relation to silica and other dust was to be revised.

Mrs Monson advised that learning from the recent CO incident at the Newcastle caravan site was being taken forward, including updating risk assessments for staff and any contractors involved.

SMT discussed the operation of the Out of Hours system and the issue of lone working. SMT felt the system continues to work well, with support from colleagues and SMT available to the on call inspector. For example, in the vast majority of cases, more than one inspector normally attended the most serious incidents. However, it was agreed to seek views on lone working when the system is next reviewed.

ACTION: SMT to identify who carried out the last review and when, and to identify when the next review should take place.

5. Audit, Risk Management and Finance

SMT noted the final 2015/16 budget allocation. The original proposed reduction of 15% had been mitigated a little to allow HSENI to continue work on some of its key priorities, such as farm safety. However the 2015/16 budget was still reduced by c.11% (c. £730k) compared to 2014/15. SMT agreed to meet in w/b 23rd March to finalise group programme allocations.

ACTION: SMT to meet in w/b 23rd March to finalise group programme allocations.

SMT noted the 2014/15 budget remained broadly on profile and that the significant programme spend planned for the last quarter of the financial year was being progressed. In year reductions seemed to have been managed well by staff with significant efforts made by everyone to maximise spend on our priorities whilst still remaining within budget. SMT praised the efforts of staff in managing budgets well in what has been a very uncertain year. SMT also praised the team in Financial Management Unit for coping with the many and complex budget exercises in 2014/15.

SMT considered the risk register and emerging risks. SMT noted a potential risk around loss of momentum with local government partnerships given the recent reconfiguration of councils and agreed to keep an eye on this issue over the coming months.

SMT considered the paper from C Stuart on the potential and issues associated with commercialising / charging for elements of scientific services' work. SMT was grateful for the work done and noted in particular the issues around potential conflict of interest and retaining income generated. SMT thought there might be scope to charge for work carried out for other government agencies, for example local government or the HSA. Dr Monson would discuss the paper further with A Boylan and C Stuart.

ACTION: Dr Monson to have further discussions with A Boylan and C Stuart on the paper and potential

SMT considered the advice from P Moore and A Martin around HSENI attracting sponsorship for programme activities, for example in the area of farm safety promotion and education. Again SMT noted the very valid points raised around avoiding potential conflicts of interest and ensuring any process of attracting sponsorship was open and transparent. It was agreed to progress the issue through the Farm Safety Partnership's Affiliate Scheme with a view to promoting potential affiliate opportunities widely in the agri-food sector to begin with.

6. HR

SMT noted the update from DHR in relation to interest in the Voluntary Exit Scheme (VES). 16 staff had expressed an interest to date. SMT had several questions on the scheme process and timetable as well as around flexibility for filling posts and staff transferring in and out of HSENI. SMT agreed to task DHR to seek answers to these questions, accepting that there still remains a large element of uncertainty around the operation of the scheme.

ACTION: Mr Morrison to ask DHR to seek answers to several questions around the VES and flexibilities for managing vacancies

SMT discussed the EMAS occupational health nurse post. On the basis of the findings to date SMT agreed the continuing need for in-house occupational health advice at an appropriate grade to support the inspectorate. It was agreed to seek CHR's agreement to extend the current temporary arrangement until the autumn with an intention to support that work area with a permanent staff member moving forward.

During February, 16 staff were absent for a total of 123.2 working days. The HSENI absence rate was 5.4% (NICS 4.3% and DETI 4.7%). The percentage of staff absent due to long term illness was 79.4%. The percentage of staff with no absence during December was 89.7%.

SMT considered and agreed a paper from P Moore and P Crook about IAS / premises functions and staffing.

Mr Morrison updated SMT on the current position relating to the case currently with the Civil Service Appeal Board.

Mrs Monson suggested, and SMT agreed, a future presentation by the Mental Wellbeing at Work team who were carrying out a deeper analysis of the recent stress survey for Departments. Given the work done previously by DHR on the HSENI survey, it was agreed that they should also be involved in any discussion.

ACTION: Mrs Monson to discuss a future presentation with the Mental Wellbeing at Work team

SMT noted the continuation of temporary promotion for D Shirlow / R Magee to cover absence due to illness.

7. Case and Project Work

Dr Monson provided the regular update on the current caseload of the Major Investigation Team. Out of 25 cases, 15 cases were currently being investigated or at the file preparation stage, with 1 new case added. The remaining 10 cases were with the PPS or already in the court system. Dr Monson advised that MIT's current workload again remained at capacity and any new work would need to be prioritised.

Dr Monson updated SMT on farm safety where March had seen the successful launch of the new TV ad. He explained that work also continued on 2 survivor story DVDs, with the Girl Guides on a farm safety badge, and in preparation for the International farm Safety Week in early July.

Mrs Monson updated SMT on the EMAS project which currently remains on target to report at the end of March 2015. SMT expressed its thanks to P Moore and A Haggan for all their work this important area.

Mr Morrison updated SMT on the proposed RIDDOR changes. Following a lack of agreement in the consultation, the identification of significant financial costs associated with the changes, and discussions with the Board, a recommendation had been put to the Minister not to proceed with the changes.

8. Business Planning

SMT noted that almost all 14/15 Operating Plan targets remain on target, with a significant number already completed and only a few expected not to be achieved.

Mr Morrison advised that he hoped the published 15/16 Operating Plan would be approved by the Minister in the next few weeks once financial allocations to the groups had been finalised.

SMT noted that all bilaterals should be completed by mid-April which would allow finalisation of the 2015/16 Internal Operating Plan.

SMT discussed the 2016-2020 Corporate Plan where it was agreed to circulate the work done to date to Heads of Groups in the next few weeks with a view to arranging a Management Team discussion in early May.

SMT noted the positive results of HSENI's 2014/15 Customer Care Monitoring Exercise provided by D Mullan.

9. Performance Monitoring

Dr Monson updated SMT on the various HSENI performance statistics. The figures to end February showed the work related fatality figure at 15 compared to 9 for the same period in the previous year. The figure for all reportable injuries was 2136 compared to 2245 this time last year. SMT noted that to end February 5473 inspections had been carried out. 758 complaints had been received which represented a significant increase on this time last year, again likely due to increased construction activity. 52 Improvement and 108 Prohibition Notices had been issued; again both figures were up on last year.

SMT discussed the continued increase in complaints and the need to look at this whole area given the low level seriousness of some of these complaints and the resource intensive nature of them, particularly in the context of decreasing resources. It was agreed to establish a small working group to look at revising our policy in these area to allow HSENI to focus its reducing resources on the most significant issues.

ACTION: Dr Monson / Mrs Monson to identify individuals to participate in a small working group. Dr Monson to lead the first meeting.

10. Board Business

SMT noted the date of the next Board meeting was 30 April.

11. A.O.B.

SMT considered forward diaries and key events over the next few months, including Ministerial Committees on Bamford / suicide prevention, the Ulster Famers Union annual dinner, the CEF anniversary dinner, and several NISG events including the all-Ireland quiz.

Mrs Monson raised the issue of Memorandums of Understanding and the need for a mechanism for keeping track / reviewing them. She agreed to think about how we might manage these important documents going forward.

ACTION: Mrs Monson to give some initial thought as to HSENI might manage MOUs going forward.

SMT agreed cover arrangements for the Easter period.

12. Date of next meeting

It was agreed that the next SMT meeting would be on 22 April at 2.00pm in Ladas Drive.