

## **Minutes of the HSENI Senior Management Team (SMT) Meeting**

**22 October 2015, Ladas Drive, Belfast**

**In attendance: (Chair) K Morrison**

**B Monson**

**N Monson**

**D Breen**

### **1. Apologies**

None

### **2. Minutes of last meeting**

The minutes of the last meeting held on 23 September which had been previously circulated were approved and adopted.

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

- **Dr Monson had spoken to the lab about disposal options for contaminated material and would arrange for insertion of a short section in the safety policy to cover any such occurrence.**
- **Dr Monson had amended CMS fatality recording to include an additional category of 'pending decision'. Staff are encouraged to make use of this new category and return to update the record once a decision had been taken on the case.**

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

SMT noted no staff accidents or near misses reported since the last meeting in September. Inspections had taken place in Ladas Drive / Omagh on 29 September and no significant issues had been identified. An inspection of Longbridge had taken place on 15 October (hopefully the last before the move) and again no issues of concern were identified and all previous issues were being managed.

SMT thanked Joanne Ireland for all her hard work tidying up loose ends in Longbridge and expressed its thanks to Joanne, John Wilson and all previous Longbridge premises officers for all their hard work over the years.

SMT noted a particularly challenging situation that had arisen for a member of the inspectorate staff in relation to an awkward position / personal safety issue, and how well the individual had handled the situation. Staff are once again encouraged to flag up any issues to their Head of Group or SMT.

Mr Breen updated on the Ladas Drive renovations – at present the work was going well and was remained on target for the 2nd November completion date. SMT commended all staff involved in organising the move, from both ends, and the co-operative attitude of staff involved in the move.

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

SMT discussed the 2015/16 budget. Spend on Staff and Operating Costs to end September was c.48% of the available budget and remained on target. Spend on Programme costs to date was c.33% of the available budget and again remained on target for the year. SMT noted additional programme funding of £50k which had been allocated to HSENI following a successful bid to DETI.

In relation to future budgets – 2016/17 and beyond – these would depend on the ongoing political discussions with Treasury and NI's final budget allocation for the next 3-4 years. SMT continued to look at scenarios for further reductions in budget from 2016/17 onwards.

SMT considered the risk register and emerging risks. SMT agreed no new or emerging risks needed to be added to the register at this time. Dr Monson advised that actions in relation to recommendations on CMS data quality and complaints had been progressed positively.

SMT agreed the content of the Six Monthly Stewardship return to DETI.

## **6. HR**

SMT noted the DHR update on the Voluntary Exit Scheme (VES). HSENI had committed to surrender c.8-10 posts under the scheme to ensure we could stay within our reduced 2014/15 budget. To date 16 offers had been made to staff under three tranches of the scheme. The latest position was that 7 staff (including 2 on career break) will have exited by 30 November and it was anticipated that a further 4 staff could exit by 31 January 2016. SMT noted that, depending on the final uptake of tranche 3 in HSENI, there were unlikely to be many more offers to HSENI staff in any further tranches of the scheme if it continues on a Departmental basis. There is currently expected to be 1 further tranche of the scheme, but that remains to be confirmed and will be dependent, as will any further offers to HSENI staff, on the take up in tranches 1 - 3. Should there be a tranche 4, staff would exit at the end of March 2016.

During September, 10 staff were absent for a total of 71 working days. The HSENI absence rate was 2.8% (NICS 4.5% and DETI 3.3%). The percentage of staff absent due to long term illness was 25.2% and SMT expressed its happiness that several of members of staff who had been off long term had recently returned to work. The percentage of staff with no absence during September was 91.9%. The cost of sickness absence for August was estimated at £9,000. SMT praised staff for the continued good performance in this area, which remains well ahead of the NICS and DETI averages at this stage.

Mr Morrison updated SMT on engagement with Trade Union side via the Whitley mechanism as regards restructuring HSENI to manage budget reductions and staff exits.

Mr Breen advised SMT that response rate to date in the NICS Staff Attitude currently say at a very impressive 80%.

Mr Breen also advised that the Investors in People scheme was undergoing significant change and that there would be significant increases in cost from early 2016. SMT agreed to keep re-accreditation under review.

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

SMT discussed the current caseload of the Major Investigation Team. Out of 35 cases, 20 cases were currently being investigated or at the file preparation stage, with 2 new cases added. The remaining 15 cases were with the PPS or already in the court system. Dr Monson advised that MIT's current workload remained close to capacity.

Dr Monson updated SMT on the CMS system replacement project; the system specification was proceeding well and the preparation for procurement was ongoing.

Mrs Monson updated SMT on the planned consultation on First Aid arrangements, where work had been delayed a little due to other priorities. Mrs Monson also updated on the occupational health agenda with positive discussion ongoing with HSE and a visit to Scotland planned in the next few weeks to discuss their system and potential mutual support.

SMT welcomed the very positive work carried out by the Complaints Working Group and agreed the recommendations in the Report. In a context of reduced financial and staff resources for future years, the recommendations were:

- HSENI implements a dedicated, and adequately resourced, complaints handling team.
- HSENI implements a process of triaging complaints and, based on risk, appropriate methods of investigation are selected.
- HSENI publishes revised and updated information on its complaints handling procedure based on the recommended changes

It was agreed that an implementation group would be established to take these recommendations forward. SMT expressed its thanks to all those involved to date in the Working Group.

## **8. Business Planning**

SMT discussed the presentation of the latest 2016-2020 Corporate Plan to the Board at the end of October.

Mr Breen informed SMT that the 2016/17 Operational Planning process would launch in the coming weeks. SMT noted the added complications this year of no budget certainty and restructuring but felt that it should be possible to have the outline of a new Plan and priority issues identified by early in the New Year.

## **9. Performance Monitoring**

Dr Monson updated SMT on the HSENI performance statistics. The figures to 30 September showed the provisional work related fatality figure at 5 compared to 10 for the same period in the previous year. The figure for all reportable injuries was 1231 compared to 1232 in the same period last year. SMT noted that 3028 inspections had been carried out to date and 444 complaints received so far in 15/16. Both were roughly on a par with the same period in 14/15. 21 Improvement and 68 Prohibition Notices had been issued to date.

## **10. Board Business**

SMT noted the date of the Board meeting on 29 October where the main issues were likely to be budgetary management, staff reductions and the 2016-20 Corporate Plan.

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

SMT considered forward diaries and key events over the next month. These included two North / South farm safety events, November Carbon Monoxide awareness month and the all staff event on 17 November which would provide an opportunity to update staff on corporate planning priorities and restructuring plans.

Finally, SMT wished Mr Breen all the best as he started his 12 month career break from 2 November. SMT noted that Louis Burns had been successful in the competition to fill Mr Breen's post on a temporary basis and that a note would issue to staff in the next few days.

## **12. Date of next meeting**

It was agreed that the next SMT meeting would be on 3 December in Ladas Drive.