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HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMISSION

DEVELOPMENT OF NEW HSC/E SCIENCE & INNOVATION STRATEGY

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Advisor(s):

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Issue

1. This paper describes the development of a new HSC/E Science & Innovation (S&I) Strategy.

Timing

2. Routine

Recommendation

3. For information.

Background

4. The 2000 White Paper *Excellence and Opportunity: a Science and Innovation Policy for the 21st Century* committed all Government Departments to publish S&I strategies, which should focus on 'how they can maximise the potential of science and technology activities and how they can drive innovation'. HSC/E published its S&I Strategy the following year to meet a timetable set by the Office of Science and Technology. A key aim in developing that Strategy was to capitalise on existing strengths in terms of flexibility in response to operational needs whilst making more transparent and direct the links with HSC/E's high-level business goals. To this end, S&I resources were allocated to four business blocks – Priority Programmes, Major Hazards, Securing Compliance and Mandatory Activities – in line with the HSC 2001/04 Strategic Plan.

An HSE Board member, supported by an S&I Co-ordinator and full time Project Officers, was given the responsibility for managing the S&I allocation for each Block.

Argument

5. The approach adopted in the present S&I Strategy has been effective in improving the business focus of HSE's S&I. However, a number of weaknesses are apparent and the S&I Strategy needs substantial revision to align with the new *HSC Strategy for Workplace Health and Safety in Great Britain to 2010 and beyond*. HSE's Chief Scientist is leading work to develop a new S&I Strategy as a daughter document to the HSC Strategy. This work is being undertaken over the period December 2003 – March 2004.
6. The new S&I Strategy will set out how HSE will apply S&I to help meet the objectives set out in the new HSC Strategy, and it will:
 - Integrate S&I into main programmes, identifying the business needs of these programmes that S&I can address.
 - Emphasise the importance of demonstrating how S&I activities contribute to HSE's outcomes.
 - Continue to change the balance of S&I activity, with a greater focus on health and human and organisational behaviour, establishing the evidence base for policy and delivery planning and for evaluating the impact of delivery programmes.
 - Include a broader set of S&I functions, and especially the key issue of horizon scanning.
 - Improve procedures for ensuring crosscutting issues are properly addressed.
 - Focus the message by including examples of good practice.

The S&I Strategy will cover all areas of policy and delivery for which HSE has responsibility and all HSE science, i.e. both commissioned S&I and that done by in-house specialists. It will cover both what is done and how it is done.

7. The following S&I principles currently hold true and the new S&I Strategy will build on rather than overhaul these:
 - HSE S&I should support the range of its policy and operational needs as a regulatory body and be targeted on areas identified as high priority,
 - S&I work should be carried out where it is not reasonable to expect others, especially industry, to undertake the work.
 - The new S&I Strategy will be 'owned' by the S&I Strategy Committee.
 - HSE's Chief Scientist holds the research budget and is responsible for ensuring S&I is used to the best effect. The budget is currently allocated to business blocks and individual Directorates do not receive allocations. The present business blocks will not be retained and the new S&I Strategy will be based around the five Strategic Programmes and the 'Core'.

Consultation

8. The S&I Strategy is being developed through a two-phase consultation process, and Technopolis Ltd have been commissioned to conduct a first round of bilateral interviews with the Chair, the HSE Board and senior managers from across HSE, and then to moderate a number of focus groups. The draft strategy will then be published for external consultation.

Presentation

9. The primary audience will be HSE staff but the new S&I Strategy will also be of considerable interest to external stakeholders, including OST who will be leading an external review of HSE science this year (see MISC/04/03).

Costs and Benefits

10. n/a

Financial/Resource Implications for HSE

11. Technopolis have been commissioned to undertake bilateral interviews and moderate focus groups at a cost of £25.5k, funded from the Corporate S&I budget. Development of the S&I Strategy will be co-ordinated through the Corporate Science and Analytical Services Directorate (CoSAS) and is expected to require about 50 staff days, mostly at Bands 1 and 2. There will be an additional commitment of up to 20 staff days from across HSE to participate in interviews and focus groups, much of which will be at SCS level. All staff commitments will be met from existing resources.

Environmental Implications

12. n/a

Other Implications

13. n/a

Action

14. The Commission is invited to note the work to develop a new S&I Strategy.