

HELA Meeting 1 March 2006

Consultation on Proposed Merger between HSE and HSC

A paper by LACORS

**Issue**

- 1) To discuss local authorities' concerns regarding the proposal to merge HSE and HSC.

**Decision**

- 2) No decision is necessary.

**Background**

- 3) LACORS' draft response to the consultation document on the proposed merger of HSC and HSE was discussed at the Health and Safety Policy Forum on 2 February. Following this discussion it is clear that the central concern local authorities have about the proposal is the effects of abandoning the balance which the HSC represents in principle between the two H&S delivery partners. This concern has three specific components:
  - How can a partnership exist to deliver H&S policy in which one partner (the merged body) is also the supervisory body?
  - The availability of support and resources for local authorities' role in helping to deliver Fit3 and other H&S initiatives.
  - How will local authorities influence H&S policy-making?
- 4) It is difficult to allay these fears when so little of the detail supporting the new arrangements has been worked out. While the LGP is considered a worthwhile development it is clearly too early to assume it will be able to adequately perform the role the CD envisages for it. The CD makes no mention of the policy forum or any other means of seeking and incorporating LA opinion.
- 5) The policy forum has raised the potential advantages of separating the central policy-making and delivery functions. It has also suggested that representation on the governing board of the merged body needs to contain a proportional balance between LAs and what is currently HSE.