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## HELA

### Role of HELA

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#### Issue

To discuss and agree additional ways in which HELA can contribute to strengthen the partnership between HSE and local authorities.

#### Summary

HELA took on a more strategic role in 2006 to provide strategic oversight of the partnership between LAs and HSE. The first three meetings of the new HELA have been successful, with much of the work being undertaken through task and finish groups. New HELA needs however to be better publicised and to have a higher profile both with the LA and HSE communities – using its authority to ensure that both sides continue to recognise the importance of sustaining and strengthening the partnership.

#### Argument

HELA was reformed in 2006 to provide stronger links from local authorities on partnership direction and the issues being debated at the centre. As well as revised terms of reference, this has largely been achieved, by having LA representatives from the LACORS policy forum. The policy forum constitute the Local Government membership of HELA. The policy forum representatives are nominated by their region to represent their views thereby providing links from officers in individual authorities to central policy makers. HSE's nominees represent those areas within HSE that are involved in taking forward the partnership. HELA is therefore in a good position to use its links to influence policy decisions from the perspective of the partnership and provide a strategic viewpoint on a variety of issues covering both policy and the field.

HELA's Terms of Reference have been set out below with comments and ideas on how their delivery can be enhanced.

**LAU/LACORS would like HELA to discuss these ideas and suggest other ways of improving the profile and developing the strategic role of HELA.**

- To recommend, endorse and champion health and safety enforcement priorities for LAs.

This is achieved each year through discussion and agreement of the Fit3 portfolio. This year includes an LA-initiated priority in relation to work related violence. HELA is being asked at this meeting to endorse and commend the portfolio to LA's.

- To embed partnership working across HSE/LAs, LAs/LAs and between HSC and LGP.

HELA has asked a task and finish group to develop the work on flexible warrants and this work will serve to develop even better partnership links both between HSE/LAs and LA/LAs. Work is still needed to ensure the culture of "partnership working is the way we do business" is recognised by all in HSE and LAs. This requires HSE representatives on HELA to use their position within as ambassadors for this culture change.

**How can further commitment from both HSE and LAs be encouraged and sustained by HELA's members?**

- To oversee the provision of the support needed to sustain and develop the partnership, including comprehensive, appropriate and timely guidance to LAs.

HELA is receiving a below the line report about the science and technology initiative which is providing excellent support to local authorities. There is a need now for HELA to influence the next stage when the initiative ends and ensure that the needs of LAs will be considered alongside HSE's in the joint science plan.

Communication and delivery of support still remains an issue, requiring more effort at the official level, however the HELA brand could be used more to develop and promote guidance that is produced by or for LAs.

**What further role should HELA have in this area?**

- To ensure local government's contribution is seen as essential to HSC/E in terms of development of policy and its delivery, and challenge where it neglects local government positions; equally, to challenge local government where it is falling short of HSC's expectations.

There is perhaps a greater potential role for HELA here. In particular HELA could lend weight to the requests for LAs for responses and data which can help demonstrate the impact and role that local authorities are having in relation to the HSC's priorities.

**What other action can HELA take to challenge both HSE and LAs?**

- To work with HSE to develop sustainable and productive stakeholder links.

The meetings of HELA help to develop those links and presence of LACORS and LAU ensure that those links are sustained. The use of task and finish groups ensure that a wide range of people are involved from both HSE and a number of local authorities.

- To influence cross government issues so that they fully reflect local government's role and contribution e.g. Hampton implementation.

HELA has discussed cross government issues and has regular updates on issues such as LABREG, Hampton, and more recently LBRO, RES bill. HELA has not seen it appropriate to respond in its own right.

- To make best use of current local strategic partnerships and bring in experience of other enforcement regimes.

This is an ongoing role and applies to both the HSE and LA sides of HELA, but HELA could consider inviting a wider range of participants where it is appropriate and they have experience of an issue would be of help to the partnership.

**Should HELA consider more outside speakers for items on the agenda where appropriate?**

There are two terms of reference relating to the LGP. Given the continuing development current early stages of the relationship between HSC and the LGP, and not least the new Chair, these terms of reference may need to be revised, but this will be a matter for the HSC and LGP themselves

- To provide authoritative advice to HSC and LGP on issues of importance to local government, local communities and best approaches to business, identify consequences of policy impact, and challenge responses.
- To report on LA activities, priorities and concerns to HSC and LGP

HELA is made aware of the issues that HSC and the LGP will be discussing. HELA does not have an official reporting role. LAU will generally report on the state of the partnership and the LGP will be briefed by LACORS on LA priorities and concerns.