

Health and Safety Commission Paper		HSC/04/40	
Meeting Date:	9 March 2004	Open Gov. Status:	Fully open
Type of Paper:	Above the line	Paper File Ref:	
Exemptions:	None		

HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMISSION

Managing Commission Business

A Paper by Mark Dempsey

Advisor(s): Mark Dempsey

Cleared by Kate Timms on 20 February 2004

Issue

1 The Commission will adopt new ways of working from 1 April. These changes are designed to enable it to: provide a more strategic focus; improve external communications and performance reporting; and strengthen arrangements for the corporate governance of HSE. This will require, among other things, a more active approach to managing HSC agendas. **Annex A** proposes outline agendas for the remainder of 2004.

Timing

2 The new arrangements will take effect from 1 April.

Recommendations

- 3 That the Commission:
- Notes the implementation of changes to agenda planning;
 - Comments on the proposed coverage of strategic policy and operational issues and on how it wants to handle regulatory packages;
 - Agrees that individual Commissioners support specific strategic programmes and sectors;
 - Agrees the key issues or theme for an open meeting in the autumn.

Background

4 Ministers have agreed to proposals recommending changes in the way the Commission fulfils its role. These have been discussed at Commission and Board meetings and Bill Callaghan has circulated notes on the proposals. Bill Callaghan led a discussion of a paper to the HSE Board on 4 February on the changes and the implications for HSE (a copy of the paper has been circulated to Commissioners).

Argument

5 Commission agendas have already been changing. However, they remain heavily dominated by regulatory packages and allow insufficient time for the consideration of significant strategic, policy and operational issues. In addition, the Commission has requested quarterly reports on performance against the PSA targets and on the implementation of the communications strategy.

6 **Annex A** proposes outline agendas for the remainder of 2004. These are designed to allow time for the consideration of:

- A strategic or policy issue at each meeting;
- An operational issue at each meeting;
- Regular reports from strategic programme directors;
- Quarterly reports on PSA performance and communications;
- Significant events – incidents or policy developments in which HSC has an interest.

7 Anticipated regulatory packages are included, but the information on the timing of these papers is incomplete. A separate paper at the 9 March meeting (HSC/04/35) lists the regulatory issues in the pipeline. While new regulations (and consultative documents etc) need to be considered by the Commission before it provides advice to Ministers, many of these packages should be handled without a full Commission discussion. The Commission is **invited** to identify those packages that may benefit from early Commission input on policy or presentational issues and how this might be handled.

Other events

8 Commissioners are invited to support strategic programme directors in the overall direction of their programmes, perhaps by sitting on programme boards. Commissioners are also invited to champion specific issues or sectors on behalf of HSC as a whole. HSE officials will make direct contact with Commissioners so as to make this approach a reality.

9 A Commission residential and visit to Sellafield has been arranged for 22 and 23 June. Details have been circulated. The Commission has also indicated that it wishes to hold an open meeting in the autumn. This might be built around one of the major themes in the new strategy, possibly:

- The extent and limits on our role in public protection and related Section 3 issues;
- Taking personal responsibility;
- The links with rehabilitation;
- Adopting new approaches to large and small firms and the relationship with local authorities.

10 The Commission is **invited** to discuss the how we make the most effective use of the open meeting.

Consultation

11 Internal.

Presentation

12 Changes to the Commission's ways of working are being communicated internally through a note from Bill Callaghan to all staff and in a series of road shows on the strategy.

Costs and Benefits

13 N/A

Financial/Resource Implications for HSE

14 None at this stage. But the new arrangements will require different relationships with senior HSE staff including programme directors for the main strategic priorities.

Environmental Implications

15 None

Other Implications

16 None

Action

17 See paragraph 3 above.