

Health and Safety Commission Paper		HSC/05/05	
Meeting Date:	8 March 2005	Open Gov. Status:	Open
Type of Paper:	Above the line	Paper File Ref:	
Exemptions:	None		

HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMISSION

HSC/E Corporate Information

A Paper by Vic Coleman

Advisors: Peter Buckley, Carole Lomax

Cleared by Vivienne Dews and Jonathan Rees 23 February 2004

Issue

1. Publishing and promoting corporate information and key messages during 2005.

Timing

2. Broad agreement at the Commission will help steer developments and assist in meeting deadlines.

Recommendation

3. That the Commission agrees to a more strategic approach on promoting corporate publications during 2005 by focusing on those publications likely to provide the greatest promotional opportunities.

Background

Corporate Information

4. Each year several HSC/E documents have to be published (either in hard copy or on the Internet). In particular:
 - the HSC Business Plan which sets out what HSE will do in the coming 3 years and how resources will be used. This has to be approved by DWP Ministers and is the statutory means by which they assent to our work programmes. The timetable this year is uncertain because of the delays in settling our allocation, but we hope to be able to publish this in April/May;
 - the HSC Annual Report and Health and the HSC and HSE Accounts which have to be published in July to meet HM Treasury 'fast-close' rules;
 - fatal injury statistics, July;
 - the Offences and Penalties Report, October; and
 - the Health and Safety Statistics Highlights, Autumn.
5. In addition, this year, we propose (in HSC/05/36) a report on progress in the first year with "*A strategy for workplace health and safety in Great Britain to 2010 and beyond*".

Public Meeting

6. The commission has also agreed to one public meeting a year and this year is proposing to go to Newcastle in November.

Argument

7. We are required to publish the corporate information, but much of it, particularly the plan, annual report and accounts, is frankly not very interesting. Apart from some interest in the fatal injury and annual statistics, it does not currently attract much publicity. Last year coverage of the release of statistics was disappointing. The publication of these corporate documents is also now set in a context of a considerable increase in the general openness of our work through open meetings, quarterly reports, open advice to Ministers etc and wider and improved use of our website.
8. With our renewed focus on delivery of occupational health and safety targets in the next three years, we should, wherever possible, maximise opportunities to promote health and safety messages or explain our work. Importantly, this year the statistics will report progress with the mid-point of the Revitalising Health and Safety (RHS) targets and the PSA targets arising from the Spending Review 2000. This will also coincide with the Commission's planned open meeting in November. **We see this, and the Spring 2006 report on progress with delivering the Strategy, as potentially providing the best opportunities for promoting corporate messages.**

Key dates and events 2005

9. Key dates 2005 are annexed and details of main corporate publications proposed this year are given below.

The Annual Report

- 9 As part of a continual review of the Annual Report, we will sharpen up the document this year. The Report must be published in July to meet Treasury requirements for "fast close" of the Accounts which are included with it. The Annual Report is a necessary formal document and we should probably not strain to exploit it particularly as July is not a good time for key messages. Whatever way we improve the Report, it is unlikely, that it could easily be used as a vehicle for publicising our achievements or our messages to wide audiences.
10. We would however welcome the Commission's views on the structure / presentation of future Reports. In the past it has been a detailed document of record. **The Commission may wish to consider again whether the presentational benefits of a more concise document might outweigh other considerations, in particular since we are proposing a very much shorter Business Plan (the Annual Report is based on the Business Plan).** However, there limits on how far we can change it: some of its content is statutorily required. Also the NAO takes an interest as the Report has to support the Annual Accounts and explain how public money has been spent. However, HSE could look at options for a shorter printed document (with detail on the HSE website) to correspond with the shorter business plan and bring options to the Commission.

The Business Plan

- 11 The possibility of a general election in May could affect the publication timetable (the process of delays in clearance with the SoS until after an election could mean a delay to publication until late May). We are aiming at a short (10 plus page) document which might offer more possibilities for promotion than hitherto. [A draft of the Business Plan will be discussed at the 8 March meeting [HSC//05/48];

The fatal injury and annual statistics

- 12 HSE is reviewing the format and content of the main statistical releases; current proposals include shorter and more visual documents. We are also discussing how best to communicate the statistical releases, for example through early identification of likely key themes and considering the different ways HSE can maximise the publicity opportunities for the different releases (including use of press conferences, human interest stories etc). Commissioners should also note that the dates of publication of both the fatal injury and annual health and safety statistics are largely outside HSE's control; National Statistics rules dictate that they must be published as soon as possible after compilation.

Supplementary publications

- 13 The publication of any of the above provides an opportunity to produce shorter, related, more accessible and interesting digests or separate documents which could be made freely available to all stakeholders. There may be other opportunities to produce publicity material during the year e.g. the proposal to report on the first year of the Strategy.

The Strategy: First Year Report

- 14 The HSC will be discussing arrangements for publication and presentation of this Report at its 8 March meeting (see **HSC/05/36**). As the paper explains, the report tells a story more of positive change than actual results, and one year on excessive publicity efforts are probably not appropriate. However, future reports could offer promotional opportunities.

Consultation

- 17 Communications Directorate; PEFD; Strategy Division; Policy Group.

Presentation

- 18 To be considered as options are developed.

Costs and Benefits

- 19 N/A until options are developed.

Financial/Resource Implications for HSE

- 20 Work will be contained within existing financial and staff resources. The estimated cost of a supplementary summary (20 pages in length) (print run of 2000) is £1000.

Environmental/Other Implications

- 21 None

Action

22 Commissioners are invited to:

- Consider whether they are happy with the general approach to promoting corporating messages outlined in paragraph 7 and if there are any other vehicles which should be developed; and
- Provide a clear steer on the form and format of the Annual Report for 2005/06 to assist the development of proposals.

Key dates 2005

April – HSC first Open meeting:

April/May - Business Plan published:

[May: General Election]

July: Fatal injury statistics

Annual Report published

October: Offences and Penalties report

November: Annual Health and Safety statistics published together with the report on whether we have met the mid point RHS targets

Autumn [November] – HSC public event, Newcastle-upon-Tyne