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HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMISSION

INFORMATION PROJECT

**A Paper by Linda Derrick
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 Cleared by Geoffrey Podger
 on 12 May 2006**

Issue

1. To inform the Commission of the start of the Information Project. The aim of the Project is to help Commissioners and HSE staff perform their roles more effectively by providing them with the right information at the right time and in the right way.
2. A number of Commissioners will be asked to identify the information they feel they need to perform their roles and which they are not currently receiving.

Timing

3. Stage 1 of the project started on 3 May and is currently scoping the extent of the problem. The Stage 1 report will be prepared by 16 June.

Recommendation

4. That:
 - Commissioners note the project and
 - those approached agree to be interviewed.

The project manager, Linda Derrick, is happy to receive comments on the project from any of the Commissioners.

Background

5. The attached Project Initiation Document covers the background, rationale, communications and cost and benefits for the project.

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ANNEX

HSE INFORMATION PROJECT

The Chief Executive of HSE agreed this document on 3 May 2006.

PROJECT INITIATION DOCUMENT

Project Mandate

1. The mandate for the HSE Information Project comes from the Chief Executive of HSE, in consultation with the Chair of the HSC.
2. The aim of the project is to help HSC/E staff carry out their jobs more effectively by providing them with the right information at the right time and in the right way.
3. The project arises from concerns expressed by a number of people, at all levels, who have suggested that they do not have all the necessary information to do their jobs effectively. For example:
 - inspectors have suggested that they do not know what is happening in HSE sufficiently well to enable them to advise employers about developments that might affect them,
 - Commissioners have suggested that they do not have sufficient information to determine HSE's progress towards its targets and are therefore unable to provide the necessary oversight to the organisation,
 - the Secretariat has suggested it does not always know who in HSE/C has responded to external queries on important issues and what was said, and are therefore unable to ensure a consistent line, and
 - staff developing or delivering initiatives have suggested that they do not know enough about other initiatives to determine whether these other initiatives will impact on their initiative, and vice versa.

Project Objectives/Terms of Reference

4. The specific objectives of the project are:
 - to identify the information needed by HSC/E staff in order for them to carry out their jobs effectively and which is not currently available, or is not available at the right time, or is not available in the right way;
 - to assess the extent of any unmet need;
 - where appropriate, to explore the options for meeting this need;
 - to assess the costs and benefits of these options; and

- to make recommendations.
5. The project will assume that HSC/E's structure will not change in the medium term.
 6. Implementation of any changes recommended or arising from the project is not included in the project's remit.

Business Case

7. At this point, we do not know whether there are significant information needs which are unmet within HSC/E, nor the extent of the problem, nor the costs of meeting the needs, nor the benefits if we do.
8. All we can do at present is indicate the implications if these problems exist, and the benefits of resolving them. If we take each of the examples in para 1 in turn:
 - better- informed inspectors might give more effective advice to stakeholders. It might persuade stakeholders to take action to improve health and safety. It might also improve the reputation of inspectors.
 - better- informed Commissioners might provide HSE with better oversight and better challenge of its work. It might improve the strategic effectiveness of HSE's work and its reputation with key stakeholders. It might help Commissioners better discharge their statutory responsibilities.
 - a better-informed Secretariat might improve HSC/E's presentation of its work, ensuring consistency in the line that it takes on issues. It might improve HSC/E's reputation with external stakeholders.
 - better- informed staff responsible for initiatives might improve the effectiveness of their own initiatives without putting other initiatives at risk. It might improve the coherence of HSE's work and its corporate effectiveness and reputation.

Initial Project Plan

9. Stage 1 of the project will scope the issues. It will attempt to answer the questions:
 - Are there problems?
 - If so, what are they?
 - Are they important?
 - Where are the problems?
 - What is the extent of the problems?
10. It is envisaged that this stage would take about 6 weeks covering a wide range of staff and others. A Stage 1 plan has been prepared.
11. If Stage 1 indicates there are problems which need further work, then it is envisaged the project will select a number of areas for more in-depth work for the next stage(s). It is envisaged that the project will finish in about 3 or 4 months.

Responsibilities

12. A project board would normally be responsible for the project representing the interests of the business, user and supplier. However, until Stage 1 is completed, it is not clear who the main users might be and what would need to be supplied. The project manager will therefore report to the Chief Executive of HSE until the end of Stage 1 when the management of the project can be reassessed; in the meantime he can represent all three interests. Nevertheless, it will be important during Stage 1 to maintain contact with HSE's Director of Communications amongst other key stakeholders.
13. It is noted that the Chief Executive has mandated himself.
14. The project manager will be Linda Derrick as from 1 May 2006.

Resources

15. Resources for the project will be that of the project manager and possibly a secretary but will be reviewed at the end of each stage.

Communication Strategy

16. The project is intended to cover all staff in HSE and the Commission. It is therefore important that everyone in HSE knows about the project and has the opportunity to contribute. It is particularly important that staff understand that the project is as much about the information needs of the frontline as about those of the Management Board and Commission.
17. On the other hand, we do not know yet whether there is a problem and we do not want to raise expectations for what is a small-scale project. So we want low-key communication unless and until we have something interesting to say.
18. We will need to review what we wish to say to external stakeholders as the project progresses.
19. Actions on communications will be included in each stage plan.

Project Quality Plan

20. It is the responsibility of the Chief Executive to provide quality assurance for this project. The project manager will make recommendations for this in each stage plan.