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HEALTH AND SAFETY EXECUTIVE

The HSE Board

Communication Strategy

A Paper by Kate Timms

Issue

1. To note progress on strengthening HSE's communication effort; in particular to note plans to subject current plans for publications in FY2003/04 to detailed scrutiny.

Timing

2. Finance Board on 17 September 2003.

Recommendation

3. To note the approach set out in paragraphs 6 to 8 below.

Background

4. Communications and its central role in helping deliver HSE's PSA targets is recognised in the emerging 2004 strategic plan. Work is going ahead to:
 - With the help of the Star Alliance, build the framework of a communications strategy which inter alia would help deliver the key points of the 2004 strategic plan;
 - Recruit a Communications Director to lead this work, together with the inseparably linked task of raising HSC/E's public profile and strengthening our capacity to defend and enhance our reputation.
5. The new Director will in due course take over responsibility for directing communications spend and act as customer for communications products and services on behalf of HSC and HSE as a whole. Meanwhile the provision of such services by DIAS is the subject of Heather Bolton's imminent review, beginning later this month.

6. Against that background, and with increasing emphasis in HSE's work of delivery against targets and the emerging 2004 strategy, there is a very strong case for cutting back on publications which are not critical to the achievement of those objectives. By doing so, we would effectively limit the volume and flow of publications in the second half of this financial year strictly to those supporting the priorities above, i.e. targets and strategy. Programme funding not spent on publications this year can be carried forward into the next financial year, by which time we shall have a clearer picture of DIAS' products and services (Heather Bolton's review) and of the communications strategy within which decisions on future spending on publications will be set (the Star Alliance work, taken forward by the Communications Director).
7. We therefore propose to carry out an immediate and thorough appraisal of planned publications with a view to proceeding only with those which genuinely support our key priorities. This will be done in an early meeting of the Communications Steering Group, an existing group whose remit is to consider priorities for HSE's external communications and the publications and publicity priorities that underpin them. Members of the Steering Group include Vivienne Dews, Adrian Ellis, one of the Policy Group Co-Directors, and me.

RECOMMENDATION

8. Board members are invited to:
 - note the stage reached in strengthening HSC/E's communications efforts;
 - note the intended scrutiny of publications planned for the second half of the financial year, with the aim of concentrating programme resource only on those publications essential to delivery of targets and strategy.