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HEALTH AND SAFETY EXECUTIVE

The HSE Board

POLICY GROUP: DELIVERING CHANGE

A Paper by Kate Timms

Purpose

1. To fulfil the remit from November 2003 to report progress in re-shaping HSE's policy group.

Timing

2. Board meeting of 7 July.

Recommendation

3. As in paragraph 15.

Where we were

4. Board paper B/03/070 reported the changes made in HSE's policy function since the change programme ushered in a major reorganisation at 1 April 2003. Discussion at the November board revealed general endorsement of the direction in which policy group was moving, and encouraged further work in the following areas:
 - aligning the policy function to deliver HSC/E's emerging strategy;
 - moving substantively into programme working;
 - forging closer partnership working between policy group and other parts of HSE;
 - removing barriers to flexible working;
 - delayering of management tiers;
 - streamlining the corporate support service.

This paper reports on progress in all these areas. It also fulfils the remit of the March 31 Board to report on relocation issues.

Where we are now

5. A snapshot of policy group as at July 2004 gives the following picture:

- **Staff:** total numbers of staff in policy group now 343. The strategy team (SID) continues to act as a small team of no more than 10 people with a constantly changing cast. Policy group and SID are distributed geographically on the following basis:
London: Policy 289, SID 3
Bootle: Policy 48, SID 3
Other (outside London): Policy 6, SID 3
- **Relocation:** at the Board discussions on relocation in February and March, policy group undertook to locate some 10 policy posts (excluding rail policy) outside London in the period up to 2008. The position as at July 2004 demonstrates that this requirement will be met:
 - i. 5 Corporate Support posts moved to Bootle, 4 more to follow as posts become vacant in Rose Court.
 - ii. 2 posts dealing with freedom of information moved to Bootle with the transfer of responsibility from policy group to RPD of this area of work.
 - iii. 1 band 4 post moved to Norwich.
 - iv. 1 band 5 post from Rose Court secretariat to Bootle to cover duty officer responsibilities.
- We intend to maintain a policy function in Bootle of sufficient critical mass to be viable. One of the policy SCS band 0s is located in Bootle, an arrangement we intend to maintain. SID draws its expertise from all parts of HSE, so giving it a broad geographic base.
- **Budget:** the budget allocation for policy group and SID has reduced in 2004/05 to £14.2 m compared with £14.9 million in 2003/04. Given the new focus of policy group's work in delivering the strategy, we foresee an increased call upon programme as distinct from payroll funding both now and for the future; this will be particularly important in contributing to delivery of outcomes in new areas of work flowing from the strategy, for example in relation to occupational health and new ways of providing advice and support.
- **Activity:** for purposes of the 2004/05 budgets planning round, the policy group breakdown of activity as between core and programme working was 65:35. Given the impetus towards programme working provided by the development of strategic programmes, this breakdown will change during the current budget year.

Where we are moving

6. Work is now focussing on:

a) **Programme and project working**

7. Policy group is at the forefront of delivering outcomes through programme-based working, and is consciously aligning its resource increasingly to that end. Of this year's cohort of 17 new Band 4s, 11 are working directly on or in support of strategic programmes. We are encouraging staff to work more flexibly full-time or part-time on projects within Policy Group and for other parts of HSE. We recognise that setting up the strategic programmes – a key element in delivery of the new strategy – has taken time, and that more needs to be done to train staff at all levels in the new ways of working that programmes entail. **However policy group intends to achieve an outcome by March 2004 whereby more than 50% of its staff are engaged in support of the strategic programmes, and the group as a whole is set to improve on that figure in succeeding years.**

b) **Delivering the strategy**

8. Delivery of the strategy is for HSC/E as a whole. Policy Group has a key role to play in:

- Delivering those outcomes that reflect the new direction set by the strategy.
- Initiating the policy thinking that will develop ideas in the strategy to the point of implementation. Examples of this are securing better access to advice which is perceived to be free from the fear of enforcement, becoming a modern regulator and pressing a public debate about our role in public safety issues.
- Supporting the strategic programme directors in challenging the status quo to develop more innovative and focussed programmes to deliver the targets.

Examples of how the group is fulfilling these roles are as follows:

When the HSC asked for work on vulnerable workers in the light of the fatalities to cockle pickers at Morcambe Bay we responded quickly by setting up a small dedicated project team to work for three months with others working on similar issues in HSE to produce an agreed and coordinated way forward.

The Innovative Engagement team has come up with an alternative to regulation to encourage better work involvement and also set in train the arrangements for the Worker Safety Adviser (WSA) Challenge Fund, which was launched on 26 March 2004.

Another team in the Better Work Environment Division is doing groundbreaking work in

partnership with outside organisations to set up pilot schemes to provide occupational health and safety support for small firms.

9. To release resource for strategy-related functions, policy group has been systematically stopping or reducing activity in lower priority areas. Examples of these are as follows:

We have transferred work on the carriage of dangerous goods to Department for Transport, and stopped legislative work relating to docks.

We have reduced activity on reactive work arising from section 3 and public safety issues, whilst encouraging a wider debate on HSE's role in this area.

We are transferring the policy lead on work related road risks to the police.

We have agreed and communicated to staff Policy Group's priorities for 2004/5 to make sure that everyone understands these clearly and that resource is focused on these rather than on other work.

There is further to go in re-prioritising the work of policy group. A rigorous look at the HSC/E's legislative programme has revealed that there is significant scope (perhaps up to a 25% reduction) to forego updating of regulations and guidance, and tough questions to be asked about the need for major regulatory packages to implement upcoming EU legislation. The Commission will be invited to consider this approach at its 13 July meeting. There are important people-handling issues in the process of stopping or postponing work of low priority. **However policy group is determined to achieve this re-focussing of resource and effort on strategic priorities, and looks to other parts of HSE to act in tandem, ie by not re-creating elsewhere work from which policy group has removed resource.**

c) **Cross-boundary working**

10. Strategic programme working entails the need to work across traditional organisational boundaries within HSE. Policy group has tried to initiate and develop cross-boundary working wherever it is feasible and resource-efficient to do so. Some immediate examples are:

The Slips and Trips Programme is managed by a Policy Division Head, the programme leader is working out of FOD and the programme team embraces staff in LAU, policy, FOD and S&T: a good model for how work should be taken forward collaboratively within HSE in future.

An operational inspector carried out the first stage of the legislative review (see above) for policy group, working remotely; this involved research and analysis in consultation with all parts of the group

Detailed examples of other cross-boundary initiatives, with an analysis of what works well and what does not, is attached at [annex A](#) to this paper. However successful

some of these initiatives may be, it is clear that some obstacles remain to making cross-border working a practical reality:

- a) The difficulty of assigning policy staff to operations work at a time when resources are scarce, other priorities (eg in the programme framework) are crowding in, and line managers reluctant to release staff for what may be seen as development purposes only;
 - b) Issues around cost sharing have to be resolved on a case by case basis: who pays an individual's salary whilst "on loan" to policy (or operations) and who pays travel and subsistence if the person is working at a distance? This can be time consuming and cause delay.
 - c) Concerns that working outside policy group and a known line management structure may adversely affect an individual's interests in terms of performance recognition and advancement.
11. The conclusion must be that cross-boundary working becomes most meaningful and effective when set within a strategic programme context, where staff can see the benefits to everyone from working in new ways and can associate their role clearly with achieving the outcomes consistent with the strategy. There are also implications for our performance management systems, within which we must be able to recognise and reward working outside conventional line management structures. **It is recommended that efforts to bring policy and operations staff in to closer working partnerships be pursued vigorously within the programme-working context, so that in the course of 2004/05 a significantly higher proportion of operational staff form part of the strategic programme teams.**

d) Improving business efficiency

12. The drive to improve how we work within the limit of tight resources has resulted in the following:
- By September 2004, the SCS cadre in policy group will have reduced by a further two, ie from eight divisional heads in May 2004 to six. This compares with 9 SCS posts in November 2002. Reallocation of work across the group, with greater delegation of responsibilities to below SCS level, will be a consequence of this change. The vision is to have a small, high performing senior team focussed on delivering strategic programmes across the group.
 - Policy Group's corporate support team, now reduced in numbers from 25 in April 2003 to 12 in June 2004, has taken on additional work in the form of support for the Solicitors' office and the Communications Directorate. In effect, the team of 12 is now supporting some 435 people, representing some 10.8% of HSE's total staff.
 - A thorough reappraisal of policy group's usage of computer terminals and mobile phones has resulted in savings of £100,000 over a single year. There is scope for such savings to be replicated more widely in HSE through the exercise of greater control from central purchasing points.

- Moves to brigade vacancies as standard procedure across policy group should ensure a consistently high standard of appointment and/or promotion and produce significant efficiency savings. For example, a recent brigade of 13 Band 4 vacancies resulted in a costed saving of £12,000.
13. At the same time as policy group gains from the more efficient corporate support structure, we recognise the importance of achieving corresponding business efficiencies from other parts of policy group's activities. Examples of how this is being tackled are as follows:
- A review of demands for administrative Band 6 support has led to a re-organisation and reduction by natural wastage of staff at this level. Policy group has reduced its Band 6 cadre from 47 to 33 staff in 2003/4, and expects to reduce by a further 3 posts in this financial year. Payroll released is being used to fund additional posts in support of strategic programmes.
 - Training activities are being reviewed to ensure that all training is linked to business need and is delivered in the most cost-effective manner. Two reviews, one of language training and one of Band 4 training, are currently under way – with more planned for later in the year.

Policy Group intends to be proactive in seeking out greater efficiencies in running our business in order to maximise the use of resources in front line delivery.

Conclusions

14. Board paper B/03/070 set out a vision for policy group as comprising a smaller but more flexible group of staff focussed on delivery, building partnerships with operational and external colleagues, and developing communications and influencing skills to help achieve their objectives. That vision holds good, and the framework now provided by HSC/E's strategy helps to gear our collective policy resource to that end. The steps taken so far in realising that vision are positive and encouraging, though there are many more to be taken.

Recommendations

15. Board members are invited to note and endorse the progress made in developing policy group's role, in particular the emphasis on work to support strategic programmes (paragraph 7), to re-prioritise activity to deliver HSC/E's strategy (paragraph 9), (paragraph 11), to make cross-HSE working a reality and to achieve efficiencies in the running of our business (paragraph 13)

POLICY AND OPERATIONS: PRACTICAL EXPERIENCES OF COLLABORATION

Projects where Policy Group and Operations are working closely together

Example 1 – Controlling Falls from Height in the Outdoor Advertising Industry

1. In July 2003 a FOD London project was set up to advise the advertising industry about how to improve the safety of people putting up and taking down billboard advertisements. With the new EU directive on working at height being developed, FOD London sought advice from Policy Group about the forthcoming directive and how HSE were planning to implement it.
2. The initial problem was to find the relevant policy contact: the staff directory was hard to search, though it had to be laboriously trawled. Personal contact proved more fruitful, but slow. However once established, joint working with the Falls from Height team in policy group proved straightforward. The main parties involved were: Brent Bolton, an Inspector from FOD London NW, who led the project, with 3 other inspectors working with him from other FOD London divisions (all whilst still carrying out other inspector duties); The Falls from Height policy team were the other main contributors. FOD Safety Unit and a specialist inspector were also involved at certain stages.
3. A blitz of billboard sites in London took place which helped to force the industry to realise there was a problem. By the end of 2004 40,000 risk assessments should have been completed following Improvement Notices. The objectives of the project were to engage with the trade association and the 3 main companies in the industry to encourage the industry to self regulate; stimulate use of a passport-to-work scheme for subcontractors, and improve industry internal guidance through the trade body. For HSE the objective was to create an understanding of what the expectation of the industry should deliver, and the action to take if not evident during an inspection or other operational activity. Meetings with the industry have included a presentation given by Falls from Height team.
4. The main benefits of Policy Group involvement have been that:
 - The advertising industry is now taking the issue very seriously, in part due to the high level of commitment shown by a joint HSE operation;
 - Without policy input the industry would not have understood clearly the direction of the new EU regulations, with the risk that they would have failed to take action, or alternatively committed resources ineffectively.
 - Together, the joint teams have been able to contribute to achieving the PSA target.
5. Deliverables from the project will be advice to inspectors (which it is hoped can be implemented nationally rather than just in London) and revision of the industry's own guidance founded on knowledge gained from this project.

Projects where Policy Group and Operations are working closely together
Example 2 – Revision of Health and Safety Management systems

1. As part of its 'new ways of working', HID decided to set up a Community of Interest and Practice (COPI) about health and safety management, to help develop a more coherent HSE approach and avoid the 'we did that 5 years ago' scenario which can occur when people with relevant knowledge are excluded. The proposal was put to the Operational Management Forum (OMF), attended by a policy group (PG) co-Director. OMF asked for policy group to be involved in the work, and that in addition to the COPI, a broader review of h&s management activities be undertaken including a review of HSG65 (the HSE publication 'Successful Health and Safety Management').
2. The project team decided that three issues should be dealt with:
 - 1) Reviewing what HSE has done and is doing to make an impact on health and safety management in industry.
 - 2) Reviewing and if necessary revising HSG65 and other relevant guidance.
 - 3) Creating a forum for staff in HSE with an interest in health and safety management to exchange views.
3. The project is now underway, managed by Trevor Britton in HID. All Operations Group (OG) Directorates are involved. Policy staff working on Leisure and Standards delivery mechanisms and innovative engagement are currently involved. The COPI also has quarterly face-to-face meetings which have been a big success.
4. An initial difficulty faced by the project team was that it was impossible to identify those in policy group, or in operations group with direct responsibility for health and safety management systems. Trevor and his team therefore used personal contacts in Rose Court and elsewhere to find the people best able to help. Once identified policy staff have contributed significantly to the project as well as gaining valuable contacts and experience of benefit to their portfolio of policy work. The involvement of policy staff is of particular importance because of the links to be established between this work and the strategy – focussed work on worker involvement and relations with large companies.
5. A further difficulty has been in terms of staff resourcing. Policy Group was eventually able to second an experienced band 2 to the project, though with tight staffing numbers and competing demands a deliberate decision had to be made to give this particular work priority. The outcomes will be a report on which HSE intervention approaches have worked well or not, and the lessons learned. This will input into a review of HSG65 and similar HSE published guidance.

Projects where Policy Group and Operations are working closely together

Example 3 – Constructing Better Health

1. This project is being undertaken with the aim of improving occupational health in the construction industry. The idea dates back to 2000, but failed to progress.
2. This deadlock was overcome as a result of various factors coming together, including:
 - A preparedness to take risks – HSE deciding this was a worthwhile project and that by showing commitment on our part we would stand a better chance of bringing others on board and so generate greater willingness to address the funding issue.
 - Occupational Health moving higher up the agenda accompanied by the development of a more robust model for the delivery of occupational health support.
 - A recognition by both policy and operational teams that for this to succeed, both would need to work together on a co-operative basis, with policy and operations accepting responsibility for relevant parts of the work. However, this project predates the current move into project/programme working in HSE on the scale now envisaged.
 - Engaging external and internal champions for the work.
3. Initially, an HSE working group laid down the foundations for the project, but as the work gained momentum this was superseded by a CONIAC nominated construction industry working group (the Action Forum). Members of the Action Forum were appointed on the basis of their willingness to act as champions for the scheme and to raise funds. HSE separately commissioned an audit to identify potential funders, something that will help inform future canvassing of potential funders.
4. The construction industry needed to take a lead in delivering the pilot, with HSE support if, there were to be long term and sustainable improvements. Colleen Bowen of policy group occupational health support unit currently chairs the Action Forum. Both HSE and DWP are contributing £200,000 each to the project, and B&CE, the largest supplier of financial services and employee benefits to the UK's construction industry, has committed £200,000, leaving some £600,000 to be raised from industry. In an innovative move, HSE has worked with the construction industry to set up a Company Limited by Guarantee, "Constructing Better Health", with HSE sitting on the Board as an observer.
5. As the project has developed other parts of HSE have become involved in providing the support necessary to deliver project milestones: PEFD to help with funding mechanisms, BSD in relation to contractual matters, CoSAS as evaluators and the Construction Policy team. The project could not have happened without all the parties in HSE working towards a common goal. The pilot will cover all construction workers in a designated geographical area, probably based in the East Midlands. It is

hoped that the pilot will start in October 2004 and is planned to last 18 months to 2 years, depending on the availability of funding.

6. Critical success factors so far have been a mix of process and culture. A key factor for the success of cross working projects such as this to succeed is clarity of roles and responsibility. Equally important is a willingness to take controlled risks to get innovative schemes off the ground, and mutual respect between operational and policy staff based on recognition of the substantial skills and knowledge that each hold and the contribution they can make to the common goal.