

Health and Safety Executive Board Paper

Meeting Date:	25 August 2004	Open Gov. Status:	Fully Open
Type of Paper:	Above the line	Paper File Ref:	
Exemptions:	No		

HEALTH AND SAFETY EXECUTIVE

The HSE Board

Strategy Roadshows - An Overview

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Issue

1. Between March through to July, a series of 30 roadshows were held across HSE on the new Strategy. The roadshows have provided an opportunity for the new strategy to be presented to staff. They have also presented an opportunity for the Director General and Chair to meet with staff, and address a wide range of questions.

Timing

2. It will be important to provide feedback to staff within the next month or two about the issues arising from the roadshows and how we are responding to them.

Recommendation

3. The Board is recommended to:
 - Note the overall response to the roadshows
 - Note the main issues raised by staff at these events (paragraphs 9-21)
 - Consider what actions have already been taken in response to these issues, and the further actions that are planned
 - Advise as to whether there is any more we need to do in addressing any of the key issues

Background

4. It was decided to hold a series of roadshows to promote the new Strategy and engage with staff across the organisation. The programme of events was arranged in order to

keep them as close to local workplaces as possible – thus minimising the need for staff to travel long distances to external venues. With a few exceptions (such as Bootle and Leeds) the vast majority of these events were, therefore, held in local offices.

5. Whilst it was never intended to provide detailed answers about what the Strategy would mean for individual work programmes, this was seen as part of a process to enable staff and local management to get these answers for themselves.
6. The first roadshow was held on 15 March in Aberdeen, and the last took place in Sheffield on 8 July.

Argument

7. Around a third of staff attended the roadshows (1,230, excluding attendance at the last two events). The response was positive, with 71% saying that they found them useful, 79% feeling able to ask any question they wanted to, and 74% feeling these events were pitched at the right level. In terms of the level of understanding of the strategy, 81% had read the strategy before attending the roadshow, and after attending these events 63% felt better informed about the reasons for change and where the strategy had come from, 43% understood how it would affect their work and how they would apply it to day-to-day activities, and 34% felt more engaged and motivated. In general, there seemed to be considerable support for the direction mapped out in the Strategy, although staff were concerned to get more detailed information about what it would mean for them – and, indeed, a commitment has been given that the SCS will co-ordinate local meetings to work through this detail.
8. A number of actions will be taken to build on the roadshows:
 - The Chair to undertake a programme of visits to local offices which were not covered during the roadshows, with the intention of getting around to them by the end of the year.
 - Monthly meetings to be arranged for staff in Rose Court and Bootle with the Director General and Chair.
 - In addition, a programme of visits to local offices will be arranged over the year (involving one or two visits a month) where the focus will be on brief presentations from DG and Chair, more detailed presentation from the local SCS member on how the Strategy is being implemented, and then open discussion with staff.
9. During the course of the roadshows, a wide ranges of issues were raised during the question and answer sessions. The most common issues were as follows:
 - The need for us to defend our reputation against public attacks
 - Pay dispute
 - Working in partnership with local government
 - Getting the right mix of staff to implement the strategy
 - Resource constraints
 - Clarifying the business case for health & safety
 - How the Strategy will affect our approach to enforcement
 - Worries about the role of inspectors
 - Concern that the Strategy ignores the major hazards
 - How the new Strategy relates to other health & safety strategies

10. In addition to the 10 issues listed above, each roadshow covered a broad range of questions. Purely as an illustration, the Appendix to this paper lists the range of questions that were raised at seven of the roadshow events.

11. We are already doing a lot to address the points raised in section 9 above. However, it is important that in response to the roadshows, the Board should look at what we are already doing and whether more should be done to address these points. A summary of actions being taken in response to the 10 main issues above is as follows:

12. The need for us to defend our reputation against public attacks

- Media relations review carried out, identifying range of issues for improvement.
- HSC/E responding regularly to unfair media attacks – letters from the Chair and Director General have appeared in several national newspapers and trade journals, rebutting inaccurate stories.
- Chair has held one-on-one lunch meetings with a number of national journalists over the past few months.
- Media dinner being planned for the autumn.
- We are developing a strategy for building relations with key stakeholders.
- New area of the Intranet and Internet being developed to communicate our response to inaccurate press coverage.

13. Pay dispute

- DG and DDGs held staff meetings to discuss pay dispute – DG also held discussions after most roadshows with any staff wishing to discuss pay.
- Unions requested 2% consolidated for all staff.
- HSE offer equated to minimum cash increase of 2% for all staff, taking offer to the maximum it could go to without undermining equal pay commitments.
- This meant that 80% of staff would receive consolidated increase of 2% or above.
- Management and TUs went to Acas in attempt to reach agreement, but this failed.
- In the absence of agreement, the offer has been implemented.

14. Working in partnership with local government

- Detailed Local Authority Strategic Programme plan is being developed by mid July – will be discussed with local government organisations.
- Statement of intent around how the partnership will work has been drawn up in discussion with local government partners.
- Local Authority Strategic Programme working to strengthen communications between HSE and local government.
- Appointing regional ‘partnership managers’ to provide the local HSE focus on, and promotion of, the Strategic Programme.

15. Getting the right mix of staff to implement the strategy

- Personnel Department is working with directorates to develop HSE’s Workforce Planning and Pay Strategy.
- The workforce strategy and plans will be discussed with the Trade Unions.
- This is vital to ensuring our staffing resources are effectively aligned behind the delivery of our business priorities.

- New Model FOD gives us the opportunity to develop a range of career opportunities for staff.

16. Resource constraints

- Resource constraints are a very real issue for us, given that we and other parts of Whitehall have just been through a very tough Spending Review.
- We have presented a case to DWP for how we could utilise additional resources in order to improve the delivery of health and safety targets.
- We're expecting DWP to inform us of our allocation in the Autumn.
- Part of Resources & Planning Directorate's plans for 2004/5 include work to increase resource awareness generally across HSE.

17. Clarifying the business case for health & safety

- Case studies developed and promoted via website and through press highlighting business benefits of health & safety. Additional case studies being developed.
- New web pages being developed for the HSE site.
- MORI survey found that 73% of businesses believed health & safety is a benefit to their business and 64% believed it saved them money in the long term – we are continuing to promote these findings.
- Further research into how businesses see health and safety is planned.
- HSE is collaborating with an external partner (the Institute of Directors) to get feedback on the case studies.

18. How the Strategy will affect our approach to enforcement

- Enforcement remains an important strand of our work – and critical for delivering the strategy.
- We will need to balance enforcement with advice role, and the Communications Strategy is looking at how to strengthen the information and advice function for future years.

19. Worries about the role of inspectors

- New Model FOD allows us to use inspectors more effectively by freeing them up from a range of functions that can be performed by support staff.
- We are developing, in close consultation with LAs, a discussion document about the intervention strategies frontline staff use to promote consistent and effective application of the full range of techniques we have to improve standards.
- We are extensively revising the early years training we give inspectors to better meet their, and HSE's, needs.

20. Concern that the strategy ignores the major hazards

- The Strategy clearly states that one of our continuing aims is to work with business to prevent catastrophic failures in major hazard industries.
- All the themes of the Strategy (partnership, helping people to benefit from effective health & safety, focusing our efforts, and communicating the vision) apply to the major hazards.

21. How the new Strategy relates to other health & safety strategies

- A new area is being created on the Intranet to describe the new Strategy in detail, how it will be implemented and how it links to existing strategies and targets.

Consultation

22. Input has been invited into this paper from FOD, PEFD, PD, SID, OPSD, CEPS4, HID, and DIAS.

Presentation

23. A key theme that regularly emerges from discussions with staff about internal communications is the desire to be listened to. Staff want to see evidence, regularly, of the Board and senior management listening to points they have raised and acting upon them. The roadshows have been a major exercise in engaging with and listening to staff. It is important for the Board to respond to the points raised by communicating what actions we are already undertaking, considering what more might need to be done in addressing any of these major issues, and continuing to listen to staff views particularly on these issues.

Costs and Benefits

24. N/A

Financial/Resource Implications for HSE

25. N/A

Environmental Implications

26. N/A

Other Implications

27. N/A

Action

28. See 'Recommendations' at paragraph 3 above.

APPENDIX

OTHER ISSUES RAISED IN ROADSHOW QUESTION & ANSWER SESSIONS

Here is a list of the issues that came out of a small selection of Strategy Roadshows. This list, which is provided purely for illustration, covers seven of the Strategy Roadshows held between March and May of this year.

1. No difference between new Strategy and how we've worked in the past
2. Poor staff morale
3. Relationship between HSC & HSE
4. Lack of career progression for administrative staff
5. HSE leadership needing to engage more with staff
6. Need to improve internal communications
7. Partnership working with intermediaries and duty holders
8. Need to reduce bureaucracy from HQ
9. What does sensible health & safety mean in context of offshore
10. 'Managing risks, not eliminating them' is breach of our legal obligations
11. Need to address problem of compensation culture
12. Strategy document is gobbledegook and video is insulting since inspectors see these images every day
13. LAs unable to support health focus because don't have necessary specialists
14. Why doesn't Strategy refer to occupational health & safety on railway
15. Value of corporate topic groups
16. Are other regulators going through similar changes as us
17. Time lag between health work and health outcomes
18. Larger organisations do more harm to workers than small ones
19. Poor intelligence on health issues

20. What's happened since 'Living the values' events
21. Encourage debate about acceptable levels of risk
22. How will Strategy respond to changes in Government priorities
23. Need to look after health & safety of HSE staff
24. Response to Transport Select Committee report on regulation of railway
25. What's status of old targets
26. Section 3 role
27. Why use term 'civilised society' in our mission
28. Work with top 350 companies
29. Flow of staff from policy to operations
30. Encourage DWP to improve their own health & safety performance
31. Being flexible in using HSE logo
32. TUs communicating with health & safety reps
33. Role of industry advisory committees
34. Job enrichment vs. exploitation, eg New Model FOD
35. Approach to HSE charging for work
36. Will COIN resolve problems of FOCUS
37. Rail review presenting reputational risk
38. Why has Strategy been pushed forward at such speed
39. Support for inspectors to avoid inappropriate enforcement action
40. Role of inspectors and admin staff
41. Project working not working because doesn't count towards appraisal
42. Why are we preaching to converted about the moral case for h&s
43. Why has money for SADs been withdrawn
44. Need to communicate health & safety risks to children