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HEALTH AND SAFETY EXECUTIVE

The HSE Board

Public Reporting

A Paper by Colin Douglas

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Cleared by Colin Douglas on 21 February 2006

Issue

- 1) Proposals for co-ordinating the suite of annual publications reporting on the objectives and performance of HSE/C and the challenges facing the wider health and safety community.

Timing

- 2) For discussion at the 1st March 2006 Board meeting.

Recommendation

- 3) That the Board agrees:
 - a) the approach to public reporting set out in paragraph 7 below;
 - b) the setting up of a co-ordinating group (led by Communications Directorate, and involving Strategy Division, PEFD, CoSAS, OPSD, Fit 3, Policy) to co-ordinate production of the major products set out in paragraphs 5 and 7 below.

Background

- 4) Currently HSC/E produces a number of publications each year which report on a range of activities and, to varying degrees, describe the impact our work is having.
- 5) These annual products include:
 - a) Report on progress in implementing the HSC Strategy – published in March
 - b) Annual Report – published in June
 - c) Fatal Injuries statistics (fatalities across all sectors) – end of July

- d) Penalties & Offences Report (setting out statistics of enforcement actions) – published in October
 - e) Statistics Highlights (overview of accident and ill-health statistics) – published in November
 - f) Various sector specific annual reports (e.g., HMRI, NII)
- 6) It is widely agreed that this range of reporting is not coherent and needs to be reduced and co-ordinated to a greater degree than is currently the case.

Argument

- 7) It is proposed, therefore, that we focus our main public reporting around November by:
- a) Stopping (over time) non-essential pre-November reports
 - b) For those reports that still need to be produced before November (e.g., the Annual Report), downgrading the emphasis we place on them as public reporting tools
 - c) Ceasing production of a separate Offences & Penalties report, and instead incorporating it into the Statistical Highlight reports in 2006. It should be noted that whilst CoSAS support the general thrust of this paper, they have some concerns about this option.
 - d) Producing in the second half of November (from 2006 onwards) a *Performance Report* which summarises: what we have delivered over the course of the year, what the statistical highlights tell us about accident and ill-health trends, what the major challenges for the health and safety system are for the years ahead and what, therefore, our key priorities for the coming year will be in delivering our Strategy.
 - e) Looking at the focus and format of the sector specific annual reports to ensure that they are consistent in look and approach.
- 8) This approach would mean that the Annual Report in June would be produced with minimum fanfare as a formal document to be laid before Parliament. It would also be made available on the HSE website for members of the public who wished to see it. However, we would not actively promote it. In this way, we can maintain it as a comprehensive document of record, whilst also discharging our statutory obligations to publish it as soon after the financial year as possible. This approach is consistent with the approach adopted for last year's Annual Report.
- 9) Similarly, the second year progress report on the HSC Strategy would be produced in March of this year as a report to the Minister with advice about the key themes arising from our successes/challenges. Along with the report, we would make proposals for activity over the coming months to communicate its messages through various stakeholder conference and events, etc. However, we would not seek to distribute this report widely.
- 10) Content from the Annual Report and the Strategy progress report (and the statistics produced later in the year) would be fed into the November *Performance Report* where we would place our communications emphasis.
- 11) The *Performance Report* would need to be a short document – i.e., no more than 20 pages, including strong visual images. The target audience for this would be our key

stakeholders (at corporate, programme, regional and sector levels). November is the optimal date for producing this since we would have the key performance information from the Highlight Statistics, and we would publish in advance of the pre-Christmas publicity graveyard.

12) In order to ensure that this report is well constructed, balanced, and has impact, we would need to start planning its production now – ensuring that the key pieces of the information jigsaw can be put in place as they become available. So that we have effective co-ordination of content and format, it is proposed that a cross-HSE co-ordinating group is pulled together, consisting of Communications Directorate, Strategy Division, PEFD, Operational Policy & Support Division, CoSAS, Fit 3, and Policy Programmes.

Consultation

13) This paper has been produced by Communications Directorate in consultation with SD, CDS, PEFD, OPSD and CoSAS, Fit 3 and Policy Programmes.

Presentation

14) This paper sets out a more rational approach to HSE/C's annual reporting to stakeholders. Annual/performance reports tend not to attract a huge amount of public interest. However, they are important as a means of sharing information on progress with a range of stakeholder groups and organisations that we work closely with.

Financial/Resource Implications for HSE

15) Production and distribution costs for the proposed Performance Report, would be an estimated £10-15k. Savings have already been generated from reducing the size of the Annual Report. CDS estimate that by restricting production input to a reasonable level to achieve a quality of product similar to last year, and by reducing the print run to 500 copies, savings of £9K will be achieved. The ceasing of a separate Offences and Penalties report would also save in staff time and effort in producing a separate document that is currently published through the web.

16) However, it is important to be clear that the case for the Performance Report should not be made on the basis of achieving savings from the Annual Report. Efficiency savings in the production of the Annual Report can be made regardless of the decision on producing a Performance Report, and the estimates for the Performance Report are very rough since this would be the first year of producing it.

Environmental Implications

17) Reduction in print run on the Annual Report would result in saving in use of paper. The new Performance Report would be produced on environmentally friendly paper.

Other Implications

18) The purpose of producing a short, lively performance report and overview of the health and safety system is to set out clearly how we are doing and the key challenges that face all parts of the system. By its very nature, therefore, it will not include everything that we do. There is a risk, therefore, that those who do not feature in this document might feel that their work is being devalued. Whilst not being insensitive to this risk, we should avoid producing an encyclopaedia of HSE work activity simply to satisfy all internal stakeholders.

Action

19) If the Board agrees the recommendations in paragraph 3, the Communications Directorate will convene a co-ordinating group (involving Strategy Division, PEFD, CoSAS, OPSD, Fit 3, and Policy) to oversee production of the major products set out in paragraphs 5 and 7 above.