

WATCH COMMITTEE PAPER		WATCH/2008/7	
Meeting date:	17 June 2008	Open Govt. Status:	Fully Open
Type of paper:	Committee Procedure for debate	Paper File Ref:	
Exemptions:			

## WATCH COMMITTEE

### Terms of Reference for The Working Group on Action to Control Chemicals (WATCH)

#### Issue

1. Following the introduction of new governance arrangements in HSE, there is a need for WATCH to redraft the Terms of Reference for the committee.

#### Timing Considerations

2. Routine

#### Recommendation

3. WATCH is invited to consider the issues noted in this cover paper and to respond to the actions in paragraph 13.

#### Background

4. Following consultation with stakeholders and ministers, formal Parliamentary approval was received to merge HSC and HSE such that with effect from 1 April 2008 HSE is a single national regulatory body responsible for promoting the cause of better health and safety at work. The 'new' HSE will retain its independent status, reflect the interests of employers and local authorities and maintain commitment to service delivery.

5. HSE will be one organisation with a board of non executive directors. There is no change in health and safety requirements, how they are enforced or how stakeholders relate to HSE as the health and safety regulator.

6. The new board will take responsibility for determining policy and direction and will work on a strategy for the future of Health and Safety in Great Britain and HSE's role within that. In particular the new board will be revisiting the strategy to develop a longer term view for the next 5 years. This will be published towards the end of 2008.

7. The Board will comprise Judith Hackett as Chair and up to 11 members of the new Executive. Existing Commissioners are appointed as non-executive directors for the remainder of their term of office and will continue to be appointed by the Secretary of State. The former board members of the Executive will become the Senior Management Team (SMT) which will be chaired by Geoffrey Podger as Chief Executive.

## **Argument**

8. WATCH agreed the committee's Terms of Reference on 14<sup>th</sup> March 2004 (WATCH/2004/5). The first paragraph of the terms of reference reads :

“To be the ACTS’ scientific sub-committee to advise ACTS and HSC/E on issues relating to the assessment and control of health risks of chemicals.”

9. Following the recent introduction of the new governance arrangements reference to HSC should be removed; a redrafted Terms of Reference is attached at Annex 1.

10. WATCH is also invited to take this opportunity to consider the full text of the committee's Terms of Reference with a view to updating the text if considered necessary.

## **Link to HSC Strategy**

10. This is a WATCH committee procedure that does not relate to specific activities within HSE.

## **Consultation**

11. No wider consultation on the content of this cover paper beyond HSE has been undertaken.

## **European Context**

12. There are no links to EU procedures or activities.

## **Action**

13. WATCH is asked to consider the Terms of Reference, redrafted to take account of the new governance arrangements within HSE and to :

- i) Agree to the ammendment that takes account of the HSE's new governance arrangements
- ii) To decide whether the remaining text needs to be updated and if so suggest appropriate wording.

## **Contact:**

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## **References / Attachments**

Annex 1      WATCH Committee, Terms of Reference, 2008

**WATCH Committee**  
**Terms of reference for the Working Group on Action to Control Chemicals**  
**WATCH)**

1. To be the ACTS' scientific sub-committee to advise ACTS and *HSE*, including the Board and Senior Management Team, on issues relating to the assessment and control of health risks of chemicals.

2. WATCH's terms of reference are:

To provide scientific and technical advice to ACTS and HSE on matters within its competence. In particular, to provide scientific and technical advice to ACTS and its other sub-groups and where requested, HSE, on issues relating to chemicals, their actual or potential health impact and the means of their control in the workplace.

3. Should issues arise which require additional expertise, the Chair and the Secretariat, in consultation with WATCH members, may appoint other persons to attend meetings of WATCH to meet particular needs, including co-opting independent experts for particular issues/meetings.

4. WATCH will provide annual reports on its work to ACTS.