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HEALTH AND SAFETY EXECUTIVE

Senior Management Team

The OGC Gateway Strategic Assessment of How and Where We Work (HWWW)
Report of 26 February 2009

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Cleared by Geoffrey Podger on 1 May 2009

Issue

1. The OGC Gateway Strategic assessment of How and Where We work (HWWW) Report of 26 February 2009 included the following recommendation:

“An early assessment should be undertaken to satisfy the HSE board that any potential impact flowing from a loss of corporate knowledge and expertise is fully understood and mitigated. This assessment should be undertaken before the launch of the Voluntary Early release scheme currently projected for 1 May.”

Timing

2. Urgent.

Recommendation

3. That the SMT:
- acknowledges the risk management measures taken and those still in place, until the end of the HWWW Programme,
 - expresses its level of satisfaction with the mitigation of the remaining risks, and
 - informs the HSE Board of its conclusions.

Background

4. The OGC report included, under its heading “Management of intended outcomes”, the following statement:

“There is recognition that the HSE’s estate must shrink and there will necessarily be a redeployment of posts and staff. **A concern was expressed to us that an unintended outcome could be the loss of corporate knowledge, expertise or the HSE’s ability to respond adequately in a crisis. There is, to date, no evidence that this risk has materialised or, indeed, that it will materialise but**

we suggest that an assessment should be undertaken to satisfy the HSE Board that any potential impact of this risk is fully understood and mitigated. Given the window of opportunity for this exercise, we suggest it should be undertaken soon.”

5. The SMT HWWW sub-group recognised, from the outset, the importance of managing the risks identified above. Responsibility for managing the business risks arising were allocated to the relevant directors. The HWWW Capability workstream of the HWWW was charged with the responsibility to deliver the right number of people, with skills, knowledge and experience required, at the rate expected to effect the transition of work from London to Bootle HQ.

6. The control measures for managing these risks included:

- a. Identifying vulnerable work which needed high levels of proofing against these risks (and this included unacceptable wider reputational risks eg arising from a major loss of capability in the Secretariat) and encouragement of those who do this work to stay in HSE until the new arrangements were in place (to maintain capability).
- b. Staggering the move of work, giving priority, initially, to medium business risk work, assuring this capability before then turning to higher risk work. The plan to leave most of the lower risk work towards the end of the transition reflected the recognition of the potential (but then unknown) impact of the new HSE strategy on the current distribution of resources. This approach was subject to pragmatic decision-making to take account of earlier than expected losses of key staff.
- c. Increasing senior management attention to recruitment, induction and training, and assuring quality of judgements, outputs and their presentation – which includes approving submissions of responses to official correspondence.
- d. Retaining about 20 people with assured policy-making skills and a wide knowledge of key business issues in London (now the Westminster office) provided a level of experience on which we could draw. One of their functions include the necessary rapid response in the event of a crisis eg requiring HSE presence at COBR.
- e. Achieving a sensible balance between “Buy and Make” ie recruiting those who could deliver our business needs almost immediately – typically specialists – lawyers, legal clerks, social scientists, economists and communications experts, and those we could develop to gain the necessary knowledge and skills eg policy advisers and information officers. For both groups we recognised the need to provide, as soon as possible the HSE context to enable them to function effectively and efficiently.

- f. Adopting a best practice approach to induction – based on evidence that one of the reasons for early losses of new recruits was inattention to integrating new recruits so that they quickly come to terms with the culture, working environment and management expectations.
- g. Focussing on transferring corporate information, particularly to the largest group of inexperienced staff – mainly policy advisers. Achieving this would come, in part, from the corporate electronic data records management (EDRM) system. Further measures included, first, senior managers in Policy group introducing a system for transferring key information not held on EDRM (eg contacts, current status of workstreams and approaches to consider) either in writing and/or by one-to one transfer between existing and new staff; second, line-managers supervising and coaching as part of the on-the job training; and third, creating a temporary unit, in Bootle HQ, dedicated to helping staff improve their understanding of policy-making processes, the wider factors to take into account, and delivering the quality of work expected in policy-making.
- h. Making use of temporary recruitment of existing expertise to bridge anticipated gaps in capability – typically in the case of specialists eg communications experts.

Argument

7. The recruitment drives have resulted in 116 joining HSE at Bootle HQ. 72 came from outside HSE, the remaining 44 from within HSE. Their distribution across the Directorates affected by HWWW is 81 in Policy Group, 13 in Chief Scientific Adviser's Group, 9 in Legal Advisor's Office, 8 in Communications Directorate, and 5 in PFPD. The distribution, by discipline, comprises economists (6), lawyers (5), law clerks (3), communications (4), scientists (2), social scientist (1), and policy advisers and admin (95). Current recruitment has identified 5 possible policy team leaders (band 2) and there will be further recruitment of policy advisers at bands 3 and 4.

8. In Rose Court, 48 (21 HID staff, 8 ND, 19 Policy and communications professionals) are moving with their posts, and 9 LAO staff have moved to Treasury Solicitors. For those who have a firm date for leaving or who are out of HSE eg on loan, secondment, or career break, senior managers have taken appropriate action (as outlined in para 3). Currently there are 30 remaining in Rose Court without a plan of any kind - mostly admin/policy advisers, 6 of them on typing/ secretarial work.

9. The current assessment by senior managers of the business risks arising from the loss of these remaining staff (taking into account the continued application of the control measures for minimising these risks) is that there are none for LAO nor for Communications Directorate. For Policy Group, the risks are minimal – even if most of them were to leave at very short notice. This assessment is based on the application of our control measures, the increased capacity and growing capability at Bootle and the other safeguards eg the Westminster office capability and the option to recruit temporary staff, the risks would be managed effectively. In the meantime,

there will be further recruitment in Bootle HQ until the numbers reflect the distribution of capabilities needed to deliver HSE's contribution to the new Strategy.

Consultation

Chief Executive, PFPD, Policy Group, LAO and Communications Directorate

Costs and Benefits

10. The costs of managing the risks are primarily at the expense of lower priority work and that work which we expected or decided to finish – reflecting the changing expectations arising from the development of the new Strategy. The benefits have included overcoming recruitment difficulties we were experiencing in London – particularly of specialists. We also expect, as part of the HWWW programme benefits realisation, that the location of many of the different capabilities in Bootle HQ, will promote more efficient and effective working practices and relationships, as well as reduced travel costs.

Financial/Resource Implications for HSE

11. The costs of managing the risks arising from the transition are part of and within the agreed HWWW programme.

Environmental implications

12. One expected benefit is less travel for many staff, because they are co-located, and the increased use of staff at Westminster to deal with short notice demands for attendance eg at ministerial/departmental meetings.

Action

13. That the SMT:
- a. Confirms its support for the risk management measures taken and those still in place, until the end of the HWWW Programme,
 - b. Expresses its level of satisfaction with the mitigation of the remaining risks, and
 - c. Informs the HSE Board of its conclusions.