

HEALTH & SAFETY – A STATEMENT OF INTENT FOR ENGLAND**Purpose**

1. This paper on a Statement of Intent for how we will approach Health and Safety in England is presented for discussion, and to obtain a decision from the Board about whether, and in what form, to create a specific Statement for England.

Background/Introduction

2. Improving Health and Safety (H&S) in forestry has sector wider importance and internally within the Forestry Commission this has been identified as a top organisational priority across all parts of the GB wide organisation.
3. Various actions have been progressed within the Forestry Commission to proactively improve our approach to H&S including the establishment of GB and Country H&S Groups; increased communications including the video message from FC Chairman, and latterly using the Safety Climate Tool to seek views of all staff on current organisation H&S performance.

Key facts

4. In 2014 a Statement of Intent for H&S was published on a GB basis; attached at Annex 1. This statement is intended to succinctly and clearly set out the organisations commitment and approach to H&S within the business.
5. The high level statement compliments the more detailed arrangement for H&S set out in H&S Policy Statements which are required of each principal management unit.
6. Countries have the option of choosing to create their own high level Statements of Intent for H&S tailored more specifically to their own situations. These would sit under the umbrella of the GB wide statement.
7. The England H&S Group has considered this matter and concluded that it would be desirable to create a H&S Statement of Intent for England. The Group felt that such a Statement needed to use words that demonstrate leadership, rather than simply talk about it, and ideally would adopt a more proactive and engaging style than the current GB document.
8. Two drafts of a possible H&S Statement of Intent for England are attached.
 - 8.1. The version at Annex B largely mirrors the GB version but with the style of language in the first paragraph changed to establish a clearer sense of

personal leadership commitment from FCE Director and other wording amended to reflect the extant management structure.

8.2. The version at Annex C takes a different approach, aiming to place greater emphasis on positive organisational culture, leadership and engagement of all by more clearly expressing what is expected and will happen.

Discussion of the alternative courses of action available

9. The Board could choose not to progress a Statement of Intent for England at this time. Such a decision could sit within the context that FC employees continue to be one staff group and therefore the GB wide statement meets England's needs at this time. There is a risk that such a decision could be perceived as a lack of senior level interest in H&S in England.

10. The Board could choose to develop separate and unique H&S Statements of Intent for both Forest Services and Forest Enterprise to reflect the particular circumstances relevant to each part of the English organisation. This could sit within the context of ongoing evolution of FCE but could be perceived as being premature. This option would also require separate consideration of the Westminster functions not within FS and FEE.

Resource Implications

11. There are no immediate resource implications associated with decisions sought by this paper, the issues forming part of the ongoing work of the England H&S Group.

Risk Assessment

12. Failure to provide a clear sense of H&S leadership associated with tangible actions is likely, over time, to lead to failure to meet organisational H&S legal and mandatory requirements and concurrent failure to deliver business outcomes.

13. Current leadership from the GB and England level, including the work of the England H&S Group, is helping to mitigate the risk above. Development of a H&S Statement of Intent for England is likely to further mitigate this risk.

Equality Impact Assessment

14. Advice from the Diversity team about need for Equality Impact Assessment would be sought if the Board decides to develop an England specific statement.

Communications

15. Director of Operations will need to communicate the decision of the Board back to the England H&S Group which is due to meet in mid-April.
16. If the Board decides to progress a H&S Statement of Intent for England, communication handling would need to be considered prior to publication.

Recommendation(s)

17. The Board is invited to:

- 17.1. **Recommendation 1:** Agree that a H&S Statement of Intent for England is developed, and if so indicate whether this be for FCE as a whole or separate statements for component parts:
- 17.2. **Recommendation 2:** If Recommendation is agreed, the Board is asked to provide a steer as the style of statement it wishes to see developed.

Mike Seddon

Director of Operations

12 February 2015