Making risk related technical data more accessible to planners

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Land Use Planning in the UK –
HSE’s Role

- UK’s land use planning system is predominantly based on the Seveso Directives
- Planning law is ‘devolved’ and decision making is at local level
- We are not decision makers but our advice is given a lot of weight
- Do planners understand our advice and how can we ensure they do?
Importance of land use planning in disaster risk reduction

- Land Use Planning is a key part of disaster risk reduction
- Our economies want and need the products of hazardous installations but local authorities have obligations to build houses, provide schools, roads and infrastructure
- But they also have a duty to protect their local population
- To do this they must understand the technical advice they receive
- But those who provide technical advice also need to understand the other pressures on planners
How HSE engages on technical advice

• Most engagement with HSE on planning decisions is straightforward

• Most engagement is carried out using a our ‘Web App’ – a visual tool that steers developers and decision makers through the process and towards other sources of information

• We publish guidance on specific topics and our methodologies to make advice as clear and transparent as possible

• Encouraging early engagement is a key part of our strategy

• We also offer commercial services to facilitate discussion and understanding of advice

• All seeking to avoid cost planning enquiries
Example 1 – Oval Cricket Ground

• HSE was consulted on a proposal to redevelop a spectator area at the Oval Cricket Ground in the vicinity of a Gas-Holder.

• HSE ‘advised against’ but the authority decided to proceed leading to an inquiry.

• The proposed development was permitted and HSE received some criticism.

• An internal review identified the importance of:
  – Communicating more widely with a range of stakeholders on the nature of HSE’s case
  – Re-affirm and clarify the rational behind HSE’s policies
  – Having a communication in place early on in an inquiry
Example 2 – The ‘Planning Balance’

• A local authority wished to redevelop and expand an existing school in the vicinity of a large chemical plant

• HSE ‘advised against’ but the authority decided to proceed leading to an inquiry

• An agreement on the development was reached but demonstrated that both sides needed to understand each other’s advice and position.

• An internal review identified the importance of;
  – Communication with local authorities with significant major industry and populations
  – Using stakeholder forums to share HSE thoughts generally and in advance of specific applications