1. **Purpose of the paper**

1.1 The July 2011 board meeting agreed that there could be merit in RSSB enhancing its role in Occupational Health (OH). RSSB has commenced work to initiate discussions surrounding OH, its challenges and opportunities. This paper is an update to the board of the work conducted so far and the next steps.

2. **Stakeholder engagement**

2.1 Since July RSSB has engaged with a variety of industry stakeholders and groups to better understand needs and gather intelligence in the area of OH. Sessions have been held with individual safety management system (SMS) holders from the main constituencies and regular conversations have been held with the ORR, and relevant ATOC forums. Network Rail is supportive of working with industry partners to improve all aspects of OH management.

2.2 An OH workshop was held on 17 August 2011 involving representatives from Network Rail, ORR, RSSB, Northern Rail, DB Schenker, InfraCos, Association of Rail Industry Occupational Health Providers (ARIOPS) and the Trade Unions to undertake a “stock take” of initiatives and explore improvement opportunities.

2.3 Finally, a short literature review has been undertaken using material from the following sources: RSSB, HSE, ORR, the RVfM study and other industries.

3. **Summary Findings**

3.1 Management of OH is not a new issue for the industry; rail companies are however facing a number of significant challenges:

- Compliance with legislation. ORR’s report on work related ill health highlighted various issues for the industry in meeting legal requirements including risk assessment for Control Of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH) and Hand Arm Vibration as well as Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR) reporting.

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Reducing the significant financial loss caused by work related ill health. RSSB\textsuperscript{2} suggests that the total cost associated with an identified ‘top five’ occupational health risks is approximately £220 million per year. If some of this money could be recuperated it would form part of the business case needed for action. The ORR estimates that 3.5 million working hours are being lost due to ill health per annum.

Demonstrating an effective response to the ORR’s published Health Strategy including management culture and commitment. The management focus and culture in rail companies has not included a co-ordinated approach to the creation and implementation of effective OH management systems.

Implications of an ageing workforce, the obesity epidemic and other societal pressures.

It should be noted that a significant amount of money and resource is already expended on OH either via in house OH facilities or via external OH providers such as BUPA.

“Pockets” of good practice exist within individual companies, but many rail companies are only just beginning to develop strategy and management systems for the sustained and proactive management of OH.

The RVfM study provides a number of OH observations for industry. It suggests that:

- The Rail Delivery Group supported by the Rail Systems Agency (RSA) could increase the focus on OH.
- The failure to manage OH risks and the prevention of ill-health issues costs the industry money.
- Industry must decide how to review more critically the information and data available to it regarding its OH risk profile.

SPG, ISLG and relevant ATOC forums have shown support for RSSB working in the area of OH. In particular sharing of good practice, generating meaningful data and developing support where there is a value to be had across the industry. ISLG is currently working with RSSB towards the establishment of common OH data.

Conclusion

Work done to date has proven to be influential in creating a positive discussion about the importance of OH and has assisted in bringing about

\textsuperscript{2} RSSB, 2006. Project T382 Management of Health Conditions and Diseases. RSSB: London
consensus over the need to take further action. There is strong support for RSSB to assist industry with this complex issue and to establish what can reasonably be done that will add value. It is proposed that this work will continue until the end of the current financial year.

4.2 A successful approach to OH in the industry will require the co-ordinated involvement of a range of organisational functions such as HR, line management and safety managers, cross industry working and Trade Union engagement.

4.3 Where common agreement already exists for certain ‘added value’ activities these may be fast tracked to assist industry. Work to date with our members suggests that these activities might include:

   a. The identification and sharing of good practice through a web based resource centre, relevant groups, and events (including the next ISM and Risk Management Forum) etc.

   b. Definition of common currency data, development of causal classification and facilitation of RIDDOR reporting.

   c. Provision of tools – how to undertake COSHH assessments, tools for assessment of different types of risk, guidance on the development of business cases etc.

4.4 The potential benefit of establishing an OH group that could provide advice to RSSB on the subject and decide on behalf of industry what should be achieved as well as any further stages of OH activity should be explored.

5. Proposed next steps
   - Continue to work with and support sector groups.
   - Undertake some initial work with the freight community
   - Hold a workshop during December 2011.
   - Prepare and deliver the February 2012 ISM, the main components of which will concentrate on OH.
   - A further report to the board in March, with appropriate recommendations, concerning value added activities to be undertaken by RSSB, resources, cost implications and business case.

6. Recommendations

6.1 The RSSB board is asked to DISCUSS the findings, conclusions and next steps from the work done to date.

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3 The business case might be high level as quantitative data is very limited, as highlighted by this paper.