MINUTES OF DfT EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Date: Tuesday 4 October 2011
Time: 0900-1030
Venue: Room 5/13, Great Minster House

ExCo Members
Lin Homer (Chair)
Richard Hatfield
Steve Gooding
Clare Moriarty
Lucy Chadwick
Christopher Muttukumaru

Attendees for Papers
Jonathan Sharrocks (Item 1)
Richard Bruce (Item 2)
**** (Board Secretary) (Item 2)

Other Attendees
Marika Waitson (UK Border Agency –
Shadowing Lin Homer)
**** (Acting Private Secretary to
Permanent Secretary)
**** (Board Secretariat)

Item 1: Olympics Update

1. Jonathan Sharrocks provided ExCo with a monthly update on preparations for the transport arrangements required by the 2012 Olympics and Paralympics Games. Since his previous update the Secretary of State had, with TfL Commissioner Peter Hendy, briefed the Olympics Cabinet Committee.

2. The first exercise for DfT Olympics volunteers had also taken place with useful results and some good points to take forward into the future evolution of the Department’s operating model. ExCo expressed an interest in mainstreaming the lessons of the exercises: with proper feedback on performance, a focus on skill development and reflecting lessons from recent emergency events.

3. There would be a strong emphasis on travel demand management across Whitehall in future work. ExCo members might be asked to join the Olympics team in work with other Departments who found it hard to reduce their staff travel. The Department would also need to work closely with other Departments to minimise its exposure to LOCOG overspend.

4. The next monthly Olympics update to ExCo would be on Tuesday 1 November.
Item 2: Governance Review Recommendations

5. Lin Homer said that the paper should be treated as work in progress and that the governance review was not at a sufficiently advanced stage to be submitted to the DfT Board at its 14 October meeting.

6. Richard Bruce said that the governance review should be viewed in the context of the revised Corporate Governance Code, the change to a Secretary of State-chaired Board and the need for greater clarity and consistency in the processes leading up to major Ministerial decisions.

7. The Board Secretary added that, having spoken to those responsible for DfT’s investment appraisal framework and those who had recently reviewed its decision-making processes, his conclusion was that there was a need for a clear, transparent structure for making both investment and policy decisions. His governance review was aimed at seeking ExCo’s agreement to a revised governance structure and to a pathway for major decisions.

8. In discussion, ExCo agreed on the need for:

- an oversight of forthcoming major policy decisions;
- regular consideration of human resource issues – which would be supported by the improved management information now available;
- further work to be done on bodies below the sub-committees, looking at the need for groups, their composition, need for regular meetings, ‘sunset’ arrangements and relationships with ExCo and its subcommittees;
- different forms in which ExCo currently sat (e.g. fast stream committee, honours committee) to be recognised in the review; and
- improvements to the Ministerial Forward Look – to provide ExCo with a pipeline of forthcoming and ongoing policy initiatives, rather than merely final decisions.

9. ExCo:

i) confirmed its support for the broad thrust of the paper;

ii) requested that the Board Secretariat undertake a light-touch review of the bodies listed as reporting to board sub-committees, picking up the points in para 8 above;

   **Action:** Board Secretariat

iii) requested that a ‘policy ExCo’ meeting be convened at an appropriate time – to be attended by some directors to provide delivery challenge and by appropriate people to provide commercial challenge. A non executive board member should also be invited. Experience with this meeting would help to determine the regularity, membership and chairmanship of any future ‘policy ExCo’ meetings.

   **Action:** Board Secretariat

The names of non-SCS staff have been redacted in accordance with DfT’s publication policy.
iv) decided that a paper to the 9 December DfT Board Meeting would seek agreement to the measures required to comply with the revised Corporate Government Code. It would also inform the DfT Board of the other changes to DfT’s governance and decision-making structures, which would be agreed at an ExCo meeting in mid-to-late November.

**Action:** Governance Division

v) agreed that, following the 9 December DfT Board Meeting, the revised governance and decision-making structure would be launched in the new year.

**Item 3: Weekly Updates**

**Oral Updates**

10. ExCo members updated each other on developments since the previous meeting.

11. ExCo noted that the Professional Skills for Government framework was in some flux but agreed on the continuing importance of encouraging fast-streamers to take opportunities to expand their experiences, particularly in operational roles.

**Action:** Clare Moriarty to speak to Mervyn Thomas

12. ExCo members were reminded of the need to engage with European colleagues as early as possible in the development stage of EU Directives.

Board Secretariat
4 October 2011

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