MINUTES OF DfT EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Date: Tuesday 13 September 2011
Time: 0900-1100
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

Tracey Waltho (Item 1)
**** (Head of Social Research and Evaluation)(Items 1 and 2)
**** (Head of Departmental Research Strategy)(Item 1)
Helen Morris (Item 2)
David Brown (Item 3)
**** (Strategy Unit)(Item 3)
**** (Information Compliance and Standards)(Item 4)
**** (Head of Better Regulation)(Item 5)
**** (General Counsel’s Office)(Item 5)

Other Attendees

**** (Private Secretary to Permanent Secretary)
**** (Board Secretariat)

Attendees for Papers

Item 1: Strategic Review of Research

1. Tracey Waltho introduced the paper, which made the case that all proposals for new research should address the need for new research and set out why DfT needs to undertake it and the impact the research will have on achieving DfT’s objectives. A table was attached to the paper giving examples of the positive impact created by previous research projects.

2. ExCo supported the review and agreed to clear the final paper in correspondence. It emphasised that proposed research must respond to a need rather than being merely beneficial. It added that any new research must be proportionate as well as appropriate, necessary and affordable. There was a need to influence the agenda of outside bodies to which DfT provides funding for research.

3. Tracey Waltho said she would be sending a submission to the Secretary of State in early October and that she would clear this beforehand with ExCo via correspondence.

Item 2: Planning Process Engagement Strategy

4. Helen Morris introduced her paper, which addressed the issue of engaging staff in the Corporate Plan to cover the 2012-13 financial year. She emphasised that this would not be a re-run of the Spending review but would be concentrated on allocating resources against DfT’s Strategic Priorities.
5. The paper proposed that building block leads would be asked to test whether their 4-6 key activities fulfilled statutory, external delivery, delivery support or top Ministerial obligations. Their activities would then be challenged at director level and DGs would be asked to look at the strategic fit of their Group’s activities.

6. ExCo agreed with the proposed approach. It recommended that directors, having been provided with the necessary information and toolkit, be tasked with explaining the process to their building block leads. They should be encouraged to plan their activities starting with a ‘blank sheet of paper’ rather than simply being asked to cut resources from existing activities. The mid-year review being undertaken should provide an evidence base for the corporate plan.

7. ExCo emphasised that corporate planning should be a constant activity and that people should be constantly challenging what they were doing.

8. ExCo agreed that the activities of DfT’s Executive Agencies needed to be challenged in the same way – acknowledging that the motoring agencies were already going through a similar process.

9. ExCo agreed that it should hold a short discussion with directors over the process. Tracey Waltho agreed to consider the best way to facilitate this – an extended Monday morning directors’ round-up was one possibility suggested.

   Action: Tracey Waltho

**Item 3: Open Public Services White Paper** EC(11)87

10. Cabinet Office was requiring DfT, along with other Government Departments, to contribute to the Open Public Services White Paper, an announcement on which it would be making in November. DfT’s contribution was required by 7 October.

11. ExCo recommended some modifications to a submission that Strategy Unit would be making to the Secretary of State.

**Item 4: Information Management** EC(11)88

12. DfT staff, in common with other Government Departments, were being required by Cabinet Office to undertake annual refresher training on protecting information. ExCo discussed alternative means by which DfT staff could undertake this.

13. ExCo concluded that Directors should make the decision whether their staff should receive a briefing from the Knowledge and Information Management Team (either at divisional meetings/awaydays or by attending one of a programme of seminars being run in the autumn) or re-take the National School of Government Protecting Information e-learning module.

The names of non-SCS staff have been redacted in accordance with DfT’s publication policy.
14. ExCo was updated on the status of the current infraction proceedings in relation to late transposition of transport-related EU Directives. It was advised the Regulatory Policy Committee and the Better Regulation Executive would be advised of Directives that were overdue for transposition and that they had agreed to co-operate in expediting the legislation necessary to transpose these Directives.

15. ExCo recommended that the RPC and BRE be kept informed also of current and forthcoming Directives requiring transposition as well as overdue ones.

16. After considering this paper, ExCo requested a Gantt Chart setting out implementation dates for current and forthcoming EU Directives as well as outstanding ones, with intervening milestones being set out.

   **Action:** Christopher Muttukumaru/Head of Better Regulation

17. ExCo said that, if necessary, transposition of overdue EU Directives should be prioritised ahead of the Red Tape Challenge. It noted that it would, during the autumn, be receiving a paper on improving DfT’s EU and international engagement.

**Item 6: Weekly Update**

18. Lin Homer emphasised the need for DG sponsors to quality-assure papers that were submitted to ExCo and to the DfT Board. She said that all ExCo members had a responsibility to assist her in keeping meetings to their timed agendas. It was agreed that all ExCo members should have the opportunity to comment on the order of papers and on the timing proposed for each paper.

   **Action:** Secretariat

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