MINUTES OF DfT EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Date:    Tuesday 24 May 2011
Time:    0945-1100
Venue:   Room 5/13, Great Minster House

ExCo Members

Lin Homer (Chair)
Steve Gooding (from 1035)
Clare Moriarty
Lucy Chadwick
Christopher Muttukumaru

Attendees for Specific Items

Alison Hadley (Item 2)
Mervyn Thomas (Item 2)
Helen Morris (Item 2)

Other Attendees

**** (Private Secretary to Permanent Secretary) (from 1015)
Richard Bruce (Board Secretariat)

Apologies

Richard Hatfield

Item 1: Weekly Update

1. Lin Homer, DGs and Christopher Muttukumaru updated each other on developments in the week since the last ExCo meeting. There was a particular focus on the consequences of the recent eruption of the Icelandic volcano Grimsvotn. In discussion on this the following points were made:

   • Areas of the Department not directly involved in the immediate response needed to be prepared to offer staff resources to relieve those likely to be heavily involved in the first few days.
   
   • There was a need to clarify who was covering as DG INE (as opposed to leading the response) in Richard Hatfield's absence.
   
   • The response machinery should ideally look to separate the process of providing regularly updated information from the process focused on supporting decision-making.
   
   • Consistent address lists needed to be used in circulating updates on the situation within DfT.

2. Separately, Lucy Chadwick flagged the possibility of a small delay to the announcement on the Thameslink preferred bidder.

3. There was also a brief discussion on industrial relations and the implications of the PCS strike ballot. It was agreed that the wider public sector industrial relations situation should also be kept under review.

The names of non-SCS staff have been redacted in accordance with DfT’s publication policy.
Item 2: Arrangements for Senior Management Engagement Session EC(11)44

4. The arrangements for the engagement session with senior managers scheduled for 6 June were discussed. The following points were raised:

- The 6 June session fell at the mid-point of the 90 day engagement period and would be an opportunity to re-iterate the current focus better performance management.

- The session could include a reminder of the issues around engagement scores, and utilise some of the material prepared for the better performance workshops.

- The session could usefully play back to attendees some of the material they had generated from previous sessions to demonstrate that this had been absorbed and was informing the process of helping to shape the new DfT.

- The session should also be placed in its proper context as part of a programme of engagement with a detailed forward programme. A session in July could provide an opportunity to introduce the themes for the second 90 day engagement period running from September.

   Action: Helen Morris/Alison Hadley

Item 3: Internal Audit Plan for 2011/12 EC(11)45

5. The Internal Audit Plan for 2011/12 was provided for information only but ExCo agreed that it merited a substantive discussion. Lin Homer stressed the importance she attached to audit and the excellent work of the current Audit Committee. There was some discussion around whether audit might currently be undervalued within DfT and the need for it to be used more as a management tool by senior officials. ExCo agreed that:

- the head of Internal Audit should re-offer to meet DGs to discuss the internal audit plan.

   Action: Ian Coates

- DGs should look to have a substantive discussion on audit at their management team meetings at least once during the year.

   Action: DGs

- DGs should receive audit committee agendas, summary papers and details of cross-cutting audits.

   Action: Audit Committee Secretariat

Board Secretariat
26 May 2011

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