MINUTES OF DfT EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Date: Tuesday 12 April 2011
Time: 0845-1100
Venue: Room 5/13, Great Minster House

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

Attendees for Specific Items
Jonathan Sharrock (Item 2)
Adam Simmons (Item 2)
Valerie Vaughan-Dick (Items 3 and 4)
**** (Better Regulation Division) (Item 5)
Mervyn Thomas (Item 6)
Helen Morris (Item 6)
**** (Change Team) (Item 6)
**** (Sustainable Travel and Equalities) (Item 7)

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

Item 1: Weekly Update

1. Lin Homer updated ExCo on the discussion and outcomes of the previous week’s Permanent Secretaries’ awayday.

Item 2: DfT Operations during Olympic Games EC(11)31

2. This paper, introduced by Adam Simmons, dealt with two core workstreams:
   - Delivering DfT’s roles and responsibilities prior to and during the Olympics and Paralympics
   - Leading the way in managing DfT’s carbon footprint during the Games.

3. The paper suggested that a pool of people with and without specialist knowledge would be required to provide 24/7 cover over a 114-day period – a 4-shift pattern was suggested. Those with specialist knowledge would include people from legal, aviation, maritime and channel tunnel policy teams.

4. At least 36 people additional to the 16-person Olympics team would be required to provide non-specialist support. Directors would be required to nominate people for this. Policy leads would need to provide the resources requiring specialist knowledge.

5. ExCo suggested the following:

The names of non-SCS staff have been redacted in accordance with DfT’s publication policy.
• utilising the lead directors’ group from the Change Programme to nominate ‘volunteers’ for the non-specialist roles;
• obtaining a list of business plan milestones due for delivery in August 2012 – to enable directors responsible for these to ascertain whether any could be moved back;
• asking Executive Agencies and Government Departments with a less prominent role in the Olympics whether they could lend DfT any press officers for the duration;
• asking HR whether people sacrificing leave to work during the Olympics could take pay in lieu of leave;
• trying out tele-conferencing beforehand as a potential means of reducing staff travel;
• asking HR whether people working in a different office to GMH during August 2012 (to reduce travel into Central London) would be able to claim for any travel differentials

6. ExCo:
• agreed the approach set out in the paper;
• agreed the proposed next steps;
• agreed that policy leads should put together plans for providing specialist cover from their teams;
• agreed that each directorate needed to develop its own travel plan and to test this out during August 2011;
• requested regular summaries of actions completed and pending;
• agreed that the weekly team briefs would include regular messages regarding the Olympics.

Action: Nick Barter

Item 3: Revised Board Reporting on Finance and Efficiency EC(11)32

7. Clare Moriarty introduced the paper, saying that it was intended to elicit views from ExCo on key issues for performance reporting, rather than to present a finished product.

8. Valerie Vaughan-Dick asked ExCo some detailed questions regarding the Board’s requirements for information on specific areas. She invited ExCo’s views, which she could then feed to business partners.

9. ExCo’s views were as follows:

• The aim should be to reach a stable reporting format with information that would be regularly used.
• Information on external requirements additional to the prompt payment requirement should be provided – but not necessarily to every meeting.
• Graphs showing trends should be provided wherever possible.
• Separate information on rail performance should be provided.
• Forecast outturns should be shown alongside actual spend.
• Any information supplied to the Major Projects Authority must also be made available to the DfT Board.

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10. Valerie thanked ExCo for its input. She agreed to contact the Secretary of State to ascertain his continuing requirements for information on cash flow.

Action: Valerie Vaughan-Dick

Item 4: Review of Departmental Approval Committee EC(11)33

Session

11. Valerie Vaughan-Dick introduced this paper, which outlined work underway to rationalise and improve the current approval process for consultancy spend.

12. A letter of 31 March from the Minister for the Cabinet Office and the Chief Secretary to the Treasury had stated that Departmental Boards would be required to approve all consultancy of £20,000 and above for their Department and its Arms Length Bodies. However Efficiency and Reform Group officials had clarified, in conversation with Clare Moriarty, that the requirement was in fact for the Board to determine how spending should be approved, with a member of the Departmental Board having oversight for spending.

13. ExCo noted with approval that a team of fast-streamers had been enlisted to re-design a process for sifting and tracking approval requests submitted to the Secretary of State.

14. ExCo raised the need to monitor specifically spend by DfT on research. Richard Hatfield confirmed that the Director for Analysis and Science was leading a strategic piece of work on DfT’s strategic research requirements.

15. ExCo agreed to the recommendations set out in the paper as a basis for further work and discussion with the Secretary of State. Regular reporting of consultancy spend would be an important element of any new arrangements, to ensure that discipline installed since the Great Election was maintained as the approval process was simplified.

Action: Clare Moriarty, Valerie Vaughan-Dick

Item 5: Better Regulation EC(11)34

16. Nick Barter introduced the paper, which highlighted the priority attached by the Government to better regulation as an aid both to economic growth and to giving people a sense personal responsibility. It argued that giving the better regulation the required impetus would involve continuing ExCo support and a change to DfT’s culture.

17. ExCo agreed:

- to promote Better Regulation (BR) as a key business priority for DfT; and one driven by the Secretary of State and the Cabinet Secretary;

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• a need to bring about a culture change in DfT, away from regulating as a first resort and towards retaining domestic regulation only where there is a very good reason for doing so;
• to the creation of a Steering Committee chaired by the General Counsel to oversee the implementation of the BR agenda in DfT;
• to the creation of a small regulatory challenge team of around six people to drive DfT forward in its search for regulatory burdens to remove;
• that the General Counsel’s Office should continue to work with Richard Bruce on an appropriate reporting mechanism.

Action: Christopher Muttukumaru/****

Item 6: Capability Review

18. Helen Morris introduced the Cabinet Office’s new “light touch” Capability Review process. This would require all Departments to complete a Tier 1 capability assessment, the output of which would be a published Capability Action Plan owned and managed by the Department’s Board. Not all Departments would need to undergo a Tier 2 assessment conducted externally.

19. Helen proposed involving the non executive board members extensively in the Capability Review process. Each NEBM, she suggested, would be “twinned” with a director or divisional manager and each pair would lead on a Capability Review theme. March 2012 was the deadline for publication of DfT’s Capability Action Plan. Helen proposed that the 2011/12 staff survey results, which would be available from late-November, should be used for the review.

20. ExCo suggested that the lead directors from the Organisational Design Project should be asked to suggest people to lead on Capability Review themes, taking account of the potential for this to offer personal development opportunities.

21. ExCo agreed to the recommendations set out in the paper.

Item 7: “Giving” Green Paper – implications for DfT

22. This paper had been submitted to ExCo in an attempt to ensure a considered response to the Giving White Paper, due for publication on 12 May. The Green Paper proposed Government encouraging its employees to lead by example, driving forward volunteering and payroll giving, possibly with increased pressure for Departmental monitoring of uptake.

23. ExCo discussed potential implications of this for DfT and Agency staff – particularly for those of revenue-creating Agencies. It noted that DfT(c) staff are currently entitled to take up to three days per year of official (paid) time out of the office to undertake voluntary work. It asked the paper authors to find out whether Departments were expected to monitor
volunteering undertaken by staff in their own time – in addition to that undertaken during official time.

Action: ****/****

24. ExCo suggested to the paper authors that they:

- contact the internal communications team to explore the most effective means of:
  i. publicising examples of current volunteering by staff
  ii. encouraging more volunteering – including by promoting it as a development opportunity;
  iii. reminding people of the payroll giving facility.
- consider, with the internal communications team, whether the ‘Pulse’ surveys should capture volunteering activity;
- suggest to the Cabinet Office that the annual staff survey for Government Departments – the questions for which were specified centrally – be adapted to capture volunteering activities;

Action: ****/****

Board Secretariat
14 April 2011

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