Item 1: Access to Social Media for DfT(C) Staff and Ministers  EC(10)17

Introduction

1. Phil West presented the paper, which proposed arrangements for a) giving Ministers access to social media sites using DfT-issued IT equipment and b) giving managed access to social media sites to DfT(c) staff where a business case could be made.

2. Phil outlined the risks and mitigations for the proposed approach:

   i) access to sites currently blocked could provide more scope for DfT systems being attacked by malicious software – the firewall should mitigate this risk;

   ii) staff might be tempted to stray beyond the internet access that was strictly necessary to perform their jobs – this was already a risk with current protocols for internet access but was covered by existing guidelines and should be subject to local management action as need be;

   iii) the bigger business risk could arise from ministers and staff engaging in debate and exchanging views on internet sites – at its most serious, this could compromise the audit trail for decisions and open the department to reputational risk, hence this area would need clear guidance and tight management.

The names of non-SCS staff have been redacted in accordance with DfT’s publication policy.
Discussion

3. Points raised in discussion included:

- it was clearly undesirable for officials to be denied access to the expression of ministers’ opinions, should ministers choose to voice them over sites that were blocked by departmental protocols. However, current arrangements already provided for YouTube releases to be copied and made available via TRANSNET;

- Ministers’ views would need to be taken on the approach they wished to take on engaging in debate on social media or other websites – IMD/CD would need to produce early advice to accompany the issue of IT equipment to the ministerial team.

Conclusions

4. ExCo decided that:

i) Information Management Division should return to ExCo setting out a clear proposition to put to new Ministers about their own access to the major social networking sites – Facebook, YouTube and Twitter (along with potential consequences for the staff supporting them);

   Action: Phil West

ii) Only Communication Directorate staff should have permission to post material on the internet, including the posting of material on social networking sites. Guidance should be drafted accordingly;

   Action: Phil West

iii) ExCo would return in due course to the issue of the Department’s proactive use of social media e.g. for engaging the public in formal consultation exercises.

   Action: Secretariat

Item 2: Management Information – Business Case for Programme implementation phase

Introduction

5. Valerie Vaughan-Dick and Tracey Stead introduced the paper, which set out a business case for the Management Information Programme.

6. ExCo was being asked to approve the next phase of the Programme to enhance reporting tools and improve reporting processes, which would take eight months. The budgeted sum of £685K was now being requested (significantly less than the original sum sought for the MI project) on the understanding that savings would start to be delivered in the fourth quarter of financial year 2010/11. There was the opportunity to enhance management information for procurement as well as for the finance and HR functions.

The names of non-SCS staff have been redacted in accordance with DfT’s publication policy.
Discussion

7. Points raised in discussion included:

- Improving Management Information was an outstanding action from the most recent Capability Review – it would be important to be able to inform incoming Ministers that DfT was implementing it;
- There was a need to avoid overloading Resource Management Planning Teams, who would already be under pressure from the post-election Spending Review and the need to find savings, hence the project team must consult and listen to MI users;
- Confirmation that the management information solution was sufficiently flexible to cope with organisational change;
- Although this programme was currently limited to DfT(C), the team would explore the possibility of extending it to the Agencies

Conclusions

8. ExCo approved the business case for the Management Information Programme, within the £685k already in the CF budget.

Item 3: Organisational Change

9. ExCo received and commented on three presentations dealing with different aspects of organisational change.

Any Other Business

10. None.

Board Secretariat
10 May 2010