Minutes of DfT Executive Committee

Date:       Tuesday 30 March 2010
Time:  0900-1110
Venue:  Room 5/13, Great Minster House

Attendees:       Apologies:
Robert Devereux (Chair) Bronwyn Hill
Mike Mitchell
Richard Hatfield
Steve Gooding
Clare Moriarty
Christopher Muttukumaru
Morag Childs (Item 1)
Alison Rutherford (Item 2)
Natasha Robinson (Item 2)
xxxx (Private Office)
xxxx (Secretariat)

Item 1: Audit and Risk Assurance Reports on Travel & Subsistence and Government Procurement Card

1. Morag Childs introduced a paper that accompanied two reports by Audit and Risk Assurance on i) the operation of the internal control environment over T&S and ii) the control framework in place to ensure that Government Procurement Cards were subject to effective risk management and that the payments made through GPC were accurately identified, recorded and reflected in the accounting system.

2. Following discussion, ExCo decided:

   i. that anybody claiming T&S would be required to print out their claims, staple receipts to these and retain them for 12 months;

   ii. that line managers would be reminded of their requirement to undertake a regular 10% check of T&S claims by their staff;

   iii. that DGs would review the list of Government Procurement Card and Corporate Credit Card-holders in their areas;

       Action: DGs

   iv. that holders of Government Procurement Cards and corporate credit cards would be sent a note from their DGs reminding them of the key rules for using these cards and requiring them to return a signed declaration that they had read the rules;

       Action: DGs

   v. that a bulletin article, signalled by an article in the weekly cascade briefing, would a) remind those claiming T&S of the fundamental rules (e.g. not claiming alcohol, not claiming for home-work journeys, using the public transport rate for the vast majority of car journeys) and b) inform them of ExCo’s decisions i. and ii. above.

       Action: Clare Moriarty to ask HR to undertake this

The names of non-SCS staff have been redacted in accordance with DfT’s publication policy.
3. Alison Rutherford and Natasha Robinson introduced a paper setting out proposed actions for the day, the week and the six weeks following the forthcoming general election. As well as this list of action, ExCo was being asked to approve a draft commissioning minute for core briefing, a template for briefing on manifesto commitments and a template for a forward look of key decisions for the Secretary of State and Ministers.

4. The following was agreed regarding the table of proposed actions:

   i. Robert Devereux would seek to meet Junior Ministers himself and would only nominate a deputy to do so if he were briefing the SoS when the Ministers arrived.
   
   ii. Tailored briefing for sets of Ministers based on their party’s manifesto commitments would be discussed at the 13 April ExCo. The 20 April ExCo meeting would cover organisational change and discovery projects and absent DGs would be required to send substitutes.
   
   iii. With regard to Annex C of the paper – the forward look of Ministerial key decisions – it was agreed that there would be three forward looks; one covering the week after the election and two more strategic ones covering the period up to the end of July and the period up until the end of 2010. ExCo on 20 April would review these before passing them to Ministers.
   
   Action: Secretariat to revise Annex C accordingly
   
   iv. The Executive Committee should make themselves available during the weekend after the election to have a short collective meeting with the Secretary of State – and Ministers if they had been appointed by then. This meeting would not encompass detailed financial issues facing the Department; these would be covered individually by Robert Devereux.
   
   v. As well as DGs and directors needing to be contactable over the post-election weekend, some more junior officials should also be available – for example Kieran Rix plus DMs who may need to assist with preparations for the following week’s legislative programme and the likely early budget. The manifesto and forward look would provide an indication to DGs as to which of their staff they should ensure were contactable and available over the weekend concerned.
   
   Action: DGs to brief their directors and relevant DMs in due course
   
   vi. Machinery of Government Changes should be added to the list of possible ‘First Week’ activities. If Machinery of Government changes are made, Christopher Muttukumaru will, working with policy teams, brief Parliamentary Counsel who will be instructed to draft Transfers of Functions orders. A short note on Machinery of Government/TFOs will be put to ExCo for information.
   
   Action: Natasha Robinson and Christopher Muttukumaru

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vii. Arrangements would be made for the Monday following the election for the SoS – and any Ministers who had been appointed – to meet as large a group of DfT staff as was practicable. This would be filmed and put on Transnet for other staff to view.

viii. Rather than a specific briefing on security issues, a briefing on how DfT responds to crises would be held for Ministers in the incident room.

**Action:** Richard Hatfield to arrange

ix. In order to cascade information on Ministerial styles and preferences, a meeting for all DfT(c) SCS would be held on the Monday and Friday following the election. In addition to this, meetings with directors or their substitutes would be held in Robert’s office first thing on the Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday.

x. Christopher Muttukumaru would co-ordinate work on possible DfT proposals for a First Session Legislative Programme based on manifesto commitments or for other reasons. On 20 April, ExCo will be asked to consider priorities on bill bids for recommendation to incoming Ministers. If urgent secondary legislation is required to be made in the first couple of weeks after an election, Christopher Muttukumaru will also co-ordinate to identify such Statutory Instruments and will brief Ministers as necessary.

**Action:** Christopher Muttukumaru

xi. Robert Devereux wished to see a list of current authorisation and delegations from the SoS enabling officials to act in his name. Christopher Muttukumaru undertook to provide this and to co-ordinate further work to ensure that any gaps were filled and any other necessary amendments made.

**Action:** Christopher Muttukumaru

xii. The template for commissioning briefing on manifesto commitments – attached as Annex A to the paper – was approved by ExCo, subject to more space being allocated to pros and cons of manifesto commitments.

5. With regard to the briefing and presentations to be commissioned, the following was agreed:

i. Richard Hatfield was drafting a foreword to the manifesto briefing that would make it clear that DfT does not operate in mode-specific silos and that transport represents more than the sum of its parts.


iii. Core briefing on the Olympics would be commissioned and included with the London briefing.

iv. Core briefing on Back Office functions (HR, finance, IT etc) would be commissioned and, once received, incorporated into the “Organisation of the Department” chapter.

v. Briefing would assume little transport knowledge by new Ministers.

vi. The front of the briefing would comprise around five pages of briefing covering

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• DfT’s financial position
• what delivery models the Department has
• how these delivery models work
• what powers (including legal and international) DfT has
• how DfT might operate with fewer staff
• how each potential party’s prime manifesto commitments/business plan could be implemented;

vii. Immediately after this would come around a side of paper for each core area setting out how it is funded, its outcome and trends, DfT’s powers and constraints and its delivery partners. This would be commissioned by Clare Moriarty.

Action: Clare Moriarty

viii. The relevant side of paper could then be replicated at the beginning of each chapter of core briefing as a summary overview.

ix. The manifesto briefing, to be commissioned by John Faulkner, would then follow, followed by the core briefing consisting of 5-10 pages per chapter.

x. DGs would ask their directors and divisional managers to populate a sheet of paper setting out the five most important things in his/her area of responsibility, giving consideration as to how best to present these, including visually.

Any Other Business

6. Regarding the planned rail strike for 6-9 April it was agreed that Robert Devereux would send round a message to all staff reminding them of the staff handbook guidance. This guidance said that staff should make every effort to come into work but that, if they felt they would not reasonably be able to do so, they should speak to their line managers about alternative arrangements.

Board Secretariat
31 March 2010