

EXECUTIVE BOARD SUMMARY NOTE
5 May 2011

PART 1: GENERAL BUSINESS

Present

Title
Permanent Secretary
NHS Chief Executive
Chief Medical Officer
Director General for Social Care, Local Government & Care Partnership
Director General for Finance & Chief Operating Officer

In attendance

Non Executive Director
Deputy Director, Governance
Deputy Director, Development and Delivery

Secretariat

Deputy Director, Development and Delivery
Team Member, Development and Delivery

Welcome

- 1.1. The minutes of the April meeting were agreed. Actions from previous meetings were completed or in hand.
- 1.2. The Department would soon be announcing the appointment of its Lead NEBM, completing the full complement of Non Executive Board Members to the Departmental Board. Due to the limited number of formal Departmental Board (DB) meetings throughout the year, options would be worked up for NEBMs to be involved in DH business outside of the DBs.

NHS Listening Exercise

- 2.1 The Director General for Finance & Chief Operating Officer updated the Board on progress with the Listening Exercise. A team within DH had been assembled to support the NHS Future Forum, including comms and stakeholder engagement and policy expertise. A comprehensive programme of listening opportunities was being progressed for the Forum and Ministers. Over 120 national listening opportunities had been identified. Views and comments were being routed through the DH Website, and around 1,000 comments were already being analysed.
- 2.2 The Forum had met for the first time on 20 April, with two more meetings

planned for 11 and 23 May, with the report expected on the beginning of June.

- 2.3 Board members acknowledged the need for contingency planning in preparation for any announcements from Ministers following the outcome of the listening exercise.

Internal Audit Reports

- 2.4 Mike Wheeler, Chair of the DH Audit and Risk Committee and DB NEBM, and the Deputy Director, Governance were welcomed to the meeting.

- 2.5 In recent months, internal Audit had reported on several areas of business relating to Health protection and improvement. Where necessary, action would be taken to address issues that had arisen and the Head of Internal Audit would report back to the EB at the appropriate time to provide independent corroboration.

- 2.6 As chair of the ARC, Mike's role was to seek assurance that any failings in the reports were linked to specific incidents and not generic processes.

- 2.7 The following points were made in discussion:

- Directorates should use Internal Audit in a more pro-active way eg by asking IA to audit new areas of responsibility to reveal any shortcomings or weaknesses;
- the Audit Programme should to be clearly linked to risk management and should in future be cleared by the Executive Board;
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DH Business Plan and Structural Reform Plan

- 3.1 All government departments were expecting to publish their revised Business Plans on 11 May on the No10 website. No.10 had agreed that DH could delay its publication until after the NHS listening exercise, and a revised draft plan had been circulated to Board members. The Department had been reporting on delivery of the Structural Reform Plan actions each month, as required.

Capability Review

- 3.2 The Deputy Director of Business Planning and Organisational Development was welcomed to the meeting. The Cabinet Office's new approach to Capability Review placed responsibility for the regular assessment and on-going development of capability firmly in the hands of departments and their boards, whilst reserving the facility to conduct external capability reviews in the way in which they have been done in the past if circumstances indicated they were necessary. The key features of the Capability Review were:
- the departments carrying out its own assessment of capability against the Capability Model in light of the scale and nature of the challenges it faced;
 - completing the assessment by March 2012;
 - working with its boards in agreeing the assessment and signing off a capability Action Plan;
 - arranging for the departmental board to meet with the Cabinet Secretary to discuss their assessments and action plans; and
 - meeting again on three yearly cycle to assess progress.

3.3 Given that the assessment would need to be completed by March 2012, and the timing of the current Listening Exercise, members agreed to start the process in July, completing around the end of October.

Finance

- The Director General for Finance & Chief Operating Officer updated the Board on the 2010/11 financial position.

PART 2: TRANSITION BUSINESS

The following people joined the meeting for part 2.

Director General, Workforce

Director General, Corporate Development Directorate

Director General, Communications

Director, Transition

In attendance for item 6

Director General, Informatics Directorate

Secretariat

Deputy Director, Transition Programme

Team member, Transition Programme

Issue

Transition Programme

5.1 The Transition Director introduced the transition status report, the risk update and the critical path update.

Future state of Informatics and Transition

6.1 The key decision needed was whether the transition vehicle should be an Executive Agency or a Special Health Authority (SpHA).

6.2 In discussion the following points were made:

- There was a broader move towards either having an Executive Agency or an NDPB, rather than a SpHA, as it has a clearer accountability structure. The end accountability to the permanent secretary was clear – the interim arrangements would need to be worked out.
- It was important that any new organisation had a clear reduction in size and administration costs.
- Parts of the current organisation might need to become part of the Department of Health, for example, policy around the EU. There would also be new informatics needs for the Department, for instance with regard to the interaction with Local Government.

- 6.3 A key concern was to ensure that contracts were well managed during the transition, with the right relationships between the Informatics Transition vehicle and the other parts of the system.
- 6.4 The Board agreed that an Executive Agency option should be explored with Cabinet Office and Ministers.