

# **Department for Communities and Local Government Board Meeting**

## **Minutes of the Board meeting held on 8 September 2011**

### **Present:**

- The Rt Hon Eric Pickles MP – Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government (Chair)
- Andrew Stunell MP – Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State
- Baroness Hanham – Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State
  
- Sara Weller, Lead Non Executive Board Member
- Diana Brightmore-Armour, Non Executive Board Member
- Stephen Hay, Non Executive Board Member
  
- Sir Bob Kerslake, Permanent Secretary
- Richard McCarthy, Director-General
- David Prout, Director-General
- Sue Higgins, Director-General
- Andrew Campbell, Director, Strategy and Programme Team
- Mark Carroll, Director of Decentralisation and Big Society (Items 2 and 3)

### **Secretariat:**

- David Hill
- Helen Courtis

### **Item 1: Introduction and matters arising**

1. The Secretary of State welcomed Sue Higgins to her first Board meeting, and thanked Sue for leading the Department's response to the riots over the summer.
2. The Board asked for Baroness Hanham's apologies to be noted in the previous minutes. With that exception, the minutes were agreed.

### **Item 2: DCLG response to the riots**

3. Andrew Campbell introduced the item by updating the Board on what was known so far on the impact of the disturbances on communities and businesses, the immediate recovery package put in place, the potential causes of the disturbances and the work in place to drive the medium term recovery.
4. In discussion, the Board made the following points:
  - The Board noted the excellent response from local government, and agreed that Government should convey this message widely.
  - The focus should be to complete recovery work as soon as possible. It was important to get business back on their feet quickly.

- There was discussion on the causes of the disturbances and it was noted that the evidence was not yet firm. The recently established Community and Victim Panel would play a key role in investigating many of the issues.
- The Secretary of State thanked the Department for its work on responding to the disturbances, which had been praised across Whitehall. The Department would remain central to the work going forward.

### **Item 3: Integration**

5. David Prout introduced the paper. The Secretary of State invited the Board to comment on the paper. In discussion, the following points were made:
  - The complexity of the issue was noted. The Non-Executives challenged the Department to focus on the projects that would have the biggest impact and help address the root causes of the problems. The English Language and volunteering projects were noted as good examples.
  - The Non-Executives agreed to support the Department to collaborate with the private sector on specific integration projects, and help connect with key players in the industry.
  - Charities and youth organisations could potentially provide leverage on a number of projects, and it was suggested that success could be celebrated through an award system.

### **Item 4: ALB Reform**

6. Sue Higgins introduced the paper which set out progress against the Department's reform programme and strengthening the governance arrangements, and sought views on some commercial aspects of the Fire Service College and the QEII conference centre.
7. The Secretary of State invited the Board to comment on the paper. In discussion, the following points were made:
  - The Board noted the good progress that had been made in delivering the reform programme.
  - The commercial issues with the Fire Service College and QEII centre the issues were very different. Sue Higgins agreed to share the options appraisals for both bodies with the Non Executives as they developed.
  - The Board noted that the triennial review process would provide a further opportunity for assessing whether more could be done on the reform programme. The Department would be reviewing the support services across the CLG Group.

### **Item 5: Performance Paper**

Sir Bob Kerslake and Sara Weller introduced the papers on performance.

8. The Secretary of State invited the Board to comment on the paper. In discussion, the following points were made:

- Noted that SRP performance dipped in July but improved in August. However, performance across other departments was improving so the bar had been raised.
- Congratulated Baroness Hanham on the progress made on the Localism Bill.

**Item 5: AoB and concluding remarks**

9. The Secretary of State thanked attendees for their contribution to the meeting.