

Ministerial Board Meeting

Minutes of the Board meeting held on 24 June 2010

Present:

The Rt Hon Eric Pickles MP – Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government (Chair)

Greg Clark MP – Minister for Decentralisation

Andrew Stunell OBE, MP – Parliamentary Under Secretary of State

Bob Neill MP – Parliamentary Under Secretary of State

Baroness Hanham, CBE – Parliamentary Under Secretary of State

Irene Lucas, Acting Permanent Secretary

Joe Montgomery, Director-General

Richard McCarthy, Director-General

David Prout, Director-General

Shirley Pointer, Acting Director-General

Andrew Campbell, Acting, Director-General

Stephen Park, Interim Senior Director of Finance

Secretariat:

Nick Dexter

Jamie Cowling

Nick Burkitt

Ruth Hayes

Item 1: Opening Remarks

1. The Secretary of State wished Bob Neill a very happy birthday.
2. The Secretary of State gave a presentation on “How have we done?” His message was that the Department could be formidable for example on the abolition of RDAs, localist prudential borrowing, and scrapping HIPs. However, the department had to react with pace, ensuring that clear advice was provided and that recommendations were seen through to action. Briefing also needed to be shorter, and to avoid jargon.
3. Irene Lucas said that the Board had a real passion and desire to deliver Ministers’ agenda.

Item 2: Update on Delivery of the Localism Agenda:

4. David Prout gave a presentation the Department’s response to the localist agenda over the last month. In discussion, the following points were made:

- Green Issues were an integral part of all policy making and consideration of green issues should be a normal part of day to day business.
- Delivery of localism was not just something for CLG - other Departments needed to be involved.
- Staff should be flexibly deployed within the Department to ensure that high priority areas were staffed appropriately.
- Significant progress had been made since the General Election. However, there remained much still to do. The next few weeks were critical as once the Spending Review was completed the financial settlement would be set for the next three years.
- Externally the Department was regarded as performing well. However, it was capable of more.

Item 3: Progress and Future Opportunities for the Olympic Legacy

5. Joe Montgomery gave a presentation on governance of the Olympic legacy. The Olympic programme contained elements of all the main policy areas within the Department. In discussion, the following points were made:

- Central Government should not have a role in governance of the Olympics. The funding and responsibility should be passed to the Mayor of London.
- Funding for the Olympics should be considered for saving measures as for the rest of the Department's policy areas.

Item 4: the Department going forward

6. Shirley Pointer presented details of the current shape of the Department. In discussion, the following points were made:

- There needed to be a vigorous process involving debate and challenge to understand the staffing and skill requirements for the core functions of the department in the future.
- It would be essential for the Department to be clear about its policy agenda and services to be delivered before finalising the implications of the spending cuts on non pay administration costs and the number of people the Department employs.

Item 5: Concluding remarks

7. The Secretary of State thanked everyone for attending.