From: Helen MacNamara [helen.macnamara@cabinetoffice.gov.uk]
on behalf of Helen MacNamara <helen.macnamara@cabinetoffice.gov.uk> [helen.macnamara@cabinetoffice.gov.uk]
Sent: 08/05/2020 1:12:41 PM
To: Martin Reynolds [MReynolds@no10.gov.uk]
CC: Owen, John - CO - (OFF-SEN) [john.owen@cabinetoffice.gov.uk]
Subject: Re: personal: draft. [OFFICIAL]

agree: sending through a revised version in 20. Martin - John and I agreed we should share in outline with Mark so he can start to think about it given it's lots of change to his structures. But that you and I need to see Lee and Dom. And then we should test findings with Ben G and Ed L, before testing again with Dom, and then you and I should probably put to Mark and Dom to discuss and agree? If they aren't happy then anything we are recommend isn't going to work.

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On Fri, 8 May 2020 at 11:53, Martin Reynolds <MReynolds@no10.gov.uk> wrote:

Tried to call – not entirely sure I agree on the remote working (but many of your arguments are totally correct). Equally I don't think we should make that the focus of this note so maybe best to leave the issue out since I can see there are strong views in each direction and it would be easiest to get bogged down on that rather than sorting everything else out.

Martin

From: John Owen <john.owen@cabinetoffice.gov.uk>
Sent: 08 May 2020 10:49
To: Martin Reynolds <MReynolds@no10.gov.uk>
Cc: Helen MacNamara <helen.macnamara@cabinetoffice.gov.uk>
Subject: Re: personal: draft. [OFFICIAL]

This is great. And has actually cheered me up no end to read. Some comments in red below:

How can No 10 and the CO better support the PM in this next phase?

3.   Commissions out of No 10 channelled by Private Office

4.   Discipline around meetings (what for; when; time for producing proper papers; interrogated by whole team; everyone inputs). Stop having policy meetings about operational problems. Fewer people in meetings: include experts rather than multiple commentators/synthesizers ("far too many people operating at level one of the detail"). Make conscious choices about how we are spending people's time ("we are taking 30-40 of senior people who should be focussed on solving the problem and spending that in meetings")

5.   Make conscious decisions about which tool to use for solving which problem (PM meeting; deep dive; desk work)

6. Abolish MIGs and use normal Cabinet governance where necessary (but CDL should still carry on having the meetings he's having if they're useful).

7. (Possible) Encourage more people to work in the office (remote working less effective) **I fundamentally disagree with this. When we are telling the country to socially distance it shows utter contempt to the electorate to openly flout those rules. Plus when we are going on about how tech and data will save the day for absolutely everything to admit that we can't use it is not acceptable. Finally, one of the cultural problems we face is that there is presenteeism in both CO and No 10 instead of people actually getting on with their jobs.This is precisely why we all have problems with meeting attendance. People basically wanging on in meetings endlessly instead of making stuff happen. We need to clamp down on that culture. It is corrosive and leads to ineffective government. There are certain people for whom it is necessary to be in the office (PPS to PM, Cab Sec etc) but we need to be clear who those people are. This is about creating a modern culture of organised collaboration not superhero bunfight.**

Structural changes

6.   Set up a new PM DU [Tom Shinnner to design - his team is this nascent function] Good idea.

7.   NHS futures Unit led by (Ed Whiting?) [cement improvements made during C-19 response and identify future opportunities for change: blueprint for rest of the Parliament]

8.   C-19 "department" in the CO with right resources (particularly strategic analytical capability) and leadership [Aus Commission model? External leader?]

9.   Smaller & more focussed secretariat; clearer and more confident about its purpose. Streamline C-19 work into either of these.

10. Something about need to organise ourselves properly for non Covid work.

New cultural norms

10. More listening - and creating space for people to speak