

**SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION**

**First plenary meeting of the Public Health Commission**

**07.45 Wednesday 22 October 2008**

**100 Victoria Embankment, London (Unilever House)**

**Attendees:**

- Chairman - Dave Lewis  
 Commission - Douglas Smallwood, Helen McCallum, Professor Simon Capewell, Dr Nick Sheron, Mark Leverton, Deborah Hayeems, Baroness Peta Buscombe, Paul Kelly, Fred Turok, Jeremy Beadles  
 Apologies - Dr David Coggon, Michael Livingston, Professor Christine Williams, Dame Lucy Neville-Rofe  
 Secretariat - George Gordon, Tom Denyard (Unilever); Martin Le Jeune (Open Road)

	<b>Item</b>	<b>Minutes</b>	
1	Chairman's Welcome		
2	Introductions	All Commission members and the secretariat introduced themselves with details of their background and why they agreed to serve.	
3	Mission and Terms of Reference	<p>Members considered the Commission and terms of reference. These were endorsed subject to the following points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Clear statement of intent that all members wished to invest their time and effort in producing an innovative series of recommendations that would demand attention and deliver improvements. Consensus that a sense of what the final report would look like and what might happen after its publication would contribute to the ongoing engagement and motivation of the group.</li> <li>- Agreed that the Commission to retain ownership throughout the process and some thought to be given at this stage to how the Deal will be presented.</li> <li>- Any Responsibility Deal should necessarily work both ways: industry commitments must be</li> </ul>	<p>* Terms of reference to be amended in light of the Commission's feedback and circulated with minutes for review – <b>Secretariat and Chairman</b></p> <p>* Develop possible formats for interim and final reports - <b>Secretariat</b></p>

		<p>matched by a government prepared to deliver the infrastructure and public policy framework to facilitate change. The Commission should proactively make proposals in this regard encouraging government to work across departments (recognising its impact on society as a whole) rather than in silos.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Issue of the tension between non-regulatory agreements and competition law was highlighted. If business were to enter into voluntary agreements with the best intentions, agreements should be underwritten by government in a way that avoids conflict in the competition law arena.</li> <li>- The view that any recommendation should be practical, realistic and actionable was endorsed.</li> <li>- Broad consensus that 'public health', as stated in the objective, should be the focus of the group rather than a narrower definition such as 'diet and lifestyle practices'.</li> <li>- Question of how the Commission would manage any areas of disagreement at the time of publication was raised. General view that the Commission would prove more powerful if it can reach consensus on all issues and stand behind each of its recommendations as a collective.</li> <li>- Agreed that the focus of energies would be on the ninety per cent of areas where meaningful progress was readily achievable. A pragmatic view that if complete consensus was to prove beyond the Commission, it would need to find a way to bring transparency to that fact in the way that it reports.</li> <li>- Reminder in this context that the job of work of the Commission was not to re-write or replace public policy. It was about applying its expertise to the question of how business and government come together and drive a common agenda.</li> <li>- Question of whether the Commission had to limit itself to answering the questions in the Responsibility Deal was raised. Agreed that the Commission can bring whatever it sees fit to the debate, but that it must address each of the specific areas in the Deal as a minimum.</li> <li>- Agreed that any laws or standards enacted in this area must be designed to create a level playing field for business.</li> <li>- Agreed that the Commission was non-political in its approach although it would present its report to the Shadow Secretary of State for Health.</li> </ul>	
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Members wished to see some form of follow-up mechanism put in place to ensure that recommendations were being considered and acted on after the Commission reported.</li> <li>- Other minor amendments were proposed.</li> </ul>	
4	<p>Plan of Work</p> <p>Members considered the paper submitted by the Secretariat and made the following points:</p> <p><u>Meetings</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- A positive discussion leading to a broad consensus that the Commission would meet in plenary on at least six occasions.</li> <li>- Agreement that evidence should be gathered and synthesised outside of the meetings under the sponsorship of a Commission member with expertise in the area concerned to ensure that any summary was fair, even-handed and credible. The Commission in plenary should then focus on the fundamental issues and find creative, innovative solutions to address them.</li> <li>- Where there was a need for greater analysis of the more complex issues, it was suggested that working groups and the secretariat should work together to analyse the issues and supporting evidence, then provide a summary of key arguments to the full Commission.</li> <li>- Commission members should have the opportunity to request specific detailed reports (from which any synthesis has been produced) as necessary from the Secretariat.</li> <li>- Opportunity to draw on resource of all Commission members and their organisations for synthesised arguments in their own areas of interest highlighted.</li> <li>- One possibility would be to devote two meetings to each of the three main themes.</li> </ul> <p><u>Reports</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Broad consensus that an interim report would be appropriate, concentrating on testing the key recommendations with stakeholders.</li> <li>- Any final report would be short and recommendations-driven and the Secretariat should start thinking at an early stage about the form it should take.</li> </ul>	<p>*Plan of work over the next eight months to be drafted for discussion – <b>Secretariat and Chairman</b></p> <p>* Develop communication and consultation plan for the Terms of Reference - <b>Secretariat</b></p>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Evidence should be requested from interested parties but filtered by the Secretariat to avoid overburdening members with excess material.</li> </ul> <p><u>Media</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Consensus that transparency should be part of the Commission's way of working. Amended Terms of Reference should be made public. Minutes should be made available on request and made public at the time of the final report.</li> <li>- Minutes should provide the general sense of the discussion held by the Commission.</li> <li>- Contributions from outside of the Commission should be welcomed with a view to building on success where it existed and wherever it came from.</li> <li>- Submissions from a broader group of interested parties should be accepted based on the published Terms of Reference (which should provide a crisp focus) and synthesised by the Secretariat. A deadline should be set. It should be made clear there will be a further opportunity to contribute at the time of the interim report.</li> </ul>	
5	Key witnesses and research	<p>Members considered how best to seek information from outside experts. It was agreed that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Witnesses called to plenary meetings should be those with innovative ideas or live examples that would stimulate conversation, debate, and creative solutions, suitable as a basis for Commission recommendations. The focus should therefore be on calling witnesses with leading edge ideas.</li> <li>- Discussions with witnesses should be informal but on the basis of clear briefing from the Secretariat on key questions and areas to explore. A note of meetings will be kept rather than a verbatim transcript.</li> <li>- The Secretariat should bring 'solution options' to the Commission based on interviews with other relevant experts who will not be attending a plenary.</li> </ul>	<p>* Submit three 'must have' contributors by Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> November – <b>Commission members</b></p>
6	Future Meetings	Members agreed that meetings should be fixed as far ahead as possible.	<p>* Arrange dates for six future plenary meetings - <b>Secretariat</b></p>
	A.O.B	None. The chairman thanked members for their commitment to the process.	<p>*Circulate contact details to all members - <b>Secretariat</b></p>

