House of Commons Commission

Sir Kevin Tebbit KCB CMG was appointed by the House of Commons Commission to review the management and services of the House of Commons, with the following terms of reference—

“to review the implementation of the recommendations of the report by Mr Michael Braithwaite on the management and services of the House of Commons (HC 745, 1998-99) and his subsequent report of July 2000 on the Serjeant at Arms Department (Braithwaite 2) and to assess:
• whether the expected benefits have been realised;
• what further actions are required for the House Service to achieve the objectives laid down in the Outline Strategic Plan for the House of Commons Administration 2006 - 2011;
• whether, in particular, the organisational and staffing arrangements currently in place are adequate to realise the objectives laid down in the Resolution of the House of 26th January 2005 relating to Connecting Parliament with the Public.”

The terms of reference of the Review were announced by Nick Harvey MP on 19 October 2006 on behalf of the House of Commons Commission in a Westminster Hall debate.

The Report was submitted to the House of Commons Commission on 8 June 2007 and considered at its meeting on 18 June 2007. It is published in full.

Review team

Sir Kevin Tebbit was assisted in the review by Liam Laurence Smyth, Clerk of the Overseas Office, Catherine Fogarty, Deputy Editor (Committees) of the Official Report, and Martin Trott, Executive Officer to the Serjeant at Arms. Typing assistance was provided by Lynda Young of the office of the Director of Broadcasting.

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Preface by Sir Kevin Tebbit

I have been assisted in this review by Liam Laurence Smyth, Clerk of the Overseas Office, Catherine Fogarty, Deputy Editor (Committees) of the Official Report, and Martin Trott, Executive Officer to the Serjeant at Arms. The team has also received typing assistance from Lynda Young from the office of the Director of Broadcasting. My own thanks go to them for outstanding support at all times, including dedicated professionalism over issues where we may not all have agreed at all times.

It has been an honour and privilege to work with them and with the officials of the House as a whole who do so much to sustain our Parliamentary institution and serve our Members of Parliament with distinction.

Both I and my colleagues are very grateful to all the Members and officials who gave their time to meet the Review team. What we have learned from them is reflected in this report, but it would be invidious to supply references to conversations, many of which were conducted with great frankness. Public disclosure of any notes of those conversations would in our judgement be likely to inhibit the free and frank exchange of views and would be likely to prejudice the effective conduct of public affairs.

What follows is, at times, critical of aspects of the organisation and the way it works. But this is inevitable in a review of this kind and it should be seen in the context of admiration for the work of all those interviewed during the course of this review.

If there are any errors of fact, or interpretation, they are my own responsibility, as are the judgements and recommendations which follow.
Review of Management and Services of the House of Commons
Summary

This report should be seen as the third in a series. The first in 1990 was by Sir Robin Ibbs whose report led the previously divided responsibilities for the management and services of the House of Commons to be brought together in a co-ordinated management and decision-making structure under the control of the House and its Members. The second was the report by Mr Michael Braithwaite in 1999 who produced recommendations designed to improve strategic direction, corporate governance and the use of modern management techniques. Both Ibbs and Braithwaite recommended periodic follow-up reviews on the progress of reforms; hence this one. Our report goes with the grain of these previous reports – and with the thrust of the House Service’s own efforts.

We need, at the outset, to clarify the nature of this review. It is not intended primarily as a contribution to the current debate about the reform of Parliamentary process and procedure, either at Westminster or in its relationship to the general public. Rather the report is concerned with the more prosaic issue of how the services to support the institution of the House of Commons and Members of Parliament are governed, managed and delivered — vital in itself, given the importance of a well-functioning Parliament in the affairs of the nation, but not about constitutional policy prescriptions.

Nor is this report an exercise in management consultancy. The reviewer’s credentials are based on experience of medium and large organisations in the public sector and of the challenges Government Departments have faced over the past dozen years. This limitation does at least bring one advantage: of being familiar with the assertion — made sometimes about the Commons — that this is a unique institution, where the application of modern management and planning would be inappropriate, given the difficulty of quantifying ‘outputs’ and performance, and that trying to do so would, in any case, be frustrated by the all-pervasive influence of politics. In reality, several organisations in the public sector are also unique and face similar complexities, if not to the same degree. Our objective has been to respect the status and character of the House and preserve the special qualities of the House Service, while seeking to build organisational and executive capacity and promote effectiveness, accountability and value for money.

Governance

Ibbs and Braithwaite emphasised that a self-governing House of Commons, independent from the Executive, was a defining condition of a parliamentary democracy. A main theme of their reports was the need to ensure strong and effective oversight and engagement by the relevant bodies, composed exclusively of Members of Parliament — the Commission, the Finance and Services Committee and the Domestic Committees (now the Administration Committee). We consider the operation of these bodies in the light of these previous recommendations in Chapter 2 of our own review; and make a number of further recommendations. These are designed to enable the Commission to exercise greater control over strategy, without being drawn into micro-management; to strengthen the position of the Finance and Services Committee (in the interests both of scrutinising spending proposals and of underpinning the Commission in its governing role); and to
focus the Administration Committee more constructively on policy advice on the services required for the support of Members. Some changes in the composition of the Committees and reductions in the size of membership are proposed.

Under a self-governing institution, which also votes its own budget, the role of independent audit is particularly important to provide assurance that public funds are used appropriately. Another of our recommendations reinforces the independence of the audit function, by placing chairmanship of the Audit Committee in the hands of one of the external Audit Committee members rather than a member of the Commission as at present.

**Management**

A self-governing House of Commons does not mean that Members should try to run it themselves. They should expect a professional organisation to do it for them. We believe it is right that the management and delivery of services are delegated to the Clerk of the House and the House Service. Much of our review is devoted to this aspect, in Chapters 2, 3, 4, and 6. We have looked at performance from three angles: implementation of Braithwaite’s recommendations and their consequences; the extent to which the task of the House Service has become more complex and challenging since then; and the results of a recent survey of Members and their staff about their satisfaction with present arrangements.

Our findings are generally encouraging and reassuring. The present system is certainly not broken. Indeed the Service’s performance is well regarded overall, and its reputation with other parliamentary services is high. In only one area – management of Estates and Works – did we feel that there was a need for early remedial action. That is because a central recommendation of the Braithwaite report – the separation of the organisation into a client function and a provider function – has not been working as envisaged; and major investments are at stake. Our recommendations provide for the reintegration of Estates and Works into one Directorate, with a new Director and a Programme Office that would ‘own’ a 25-year strategy for the Parliamentary Estate, raise the quality of project management and be subject to stringent financial scrutiny to ensure that business cases and other controls meet the necessary standards. Supervision of implementation would be by an Estate Board with external expert representation. This is discussed in more detail in Chapter 4.

In the management and delivery of services more generally, we found the present arrangements to be effective across the range of the House’s work, and highly effective in some areas such as supporting the Chamber in core scrutiny and legislative functions. However, the way in which Members work has itself been changing, notably in the extent of their involvement in constituency issues and in other forms of interaction with the public. These put new demands on the House Service.

To the extent that we have criticisms, they arise largely as a result of the federal nature of the House Service — seven semi-autonomous Departments. It would be beneficial, in our view, for the capacity which exists to be brought together and directed more corporately to achieve higher levels of performance and efficiency. A range of issues are discussed in this
context: helping the Commission to establish strategic priorities and objectives; ensuring that progress towards them can be measured; putting in place more professional organisational machinery, processes and systems; actively managing resources — both financial and personnel — across Departmental boundaries for this purpose; and planning for future service requirements.

We believe that both the Commission and the House Service (the present Heads of Department and Board of Management) are working towards these ends. They were also signposted in the Braithwaite report. But the strength of the existing compartmentalised organisation, with different cultures within it, renders the necessary co-operation more difficult, the bureaucratic structures more complicated and progress more slow than either the Service itself, or Members, would wish.

In order to address this, recommendations in Chapters 2, 3 and 6 include provision for the following—

- the Clerk of the House to be freed up from more of his responsibilities for the Clerk’s Department in order to perform the role of Chief Executive of the House Service;
- an enlarged and renamed Office of the Clerk headed at senior level to act in support of the Chief Executive in implementing corporate decisions, performance management, planning and communications functions and to help remove existing duplications and competitive activity across the House Service;
- more explicit delegations from the Speaker of the House and the Chief Executive to the Heads of individual Departments, clarifying their responsibilities;
- adoption of measurable targets agreed between the Commission and Board, on what constitutes ‘success’ for the House Service in three years’ time;
- use of a House-wide performance management system to co-ordinate individual Departmental efforts and to provide a vehicle for monitoring by the governing bodies, based on a Balanced Scorecard;
- a smaller more strategic Management Board, with the inclusion of two external advisers;
- increased authority from the Management Board to the leaders of cross-cutting groups to deliver objectives and processes (to overcome the need for voluntary consensus from all Departments);
- a strengthening of the role of the Director of Finance and Administration with ‘ownership’ of finance staff House-wide: to entrench common financial processes, to generate aggregated management information to underpin improved performance and to promote more active budgetary management;
- a centralised and professional HR team to develop the House staff as a collective resource and to overcome the inefficiencies of the present personnel structure.
Our starting point in Chapter 5 is the Modernisation Committee’s landmark report of 2004 which has been substantially implemented, with the backing of a Resolution of the House. The Commission’s Strategic Plan defines the third primary objective of the House of Commons Service as being “to promote public knowledge and understanding of the work and role of Parliament through the provision of information and access”.

The Group on Information for the Public (GIP) successfully brings together officials from Commons Departments and the House of Lords to develop strategy, to draw up and compare business plans and to co-ordinate a wide range of activities, from the website to school visits to the guide for new voters. The opening of the Visitor Reception Building in the summer of 2007 will give further scope to develop the role of the new Visitor Assistants, who complement the work of the Central Tours Office, the Education Service and the police and doorkeepers in providing an efficient welcome for visitors to the estate.

The importance of keeping Members involved in the strategy for connecting Parliament with the public has been underlined by the Administration Committee’s change of tack on the planned Parliamentary Visitor and Information Centre; as a result of its recent report, GIP’s work will now focus on developing better facilities for educational visits.

Rather than create a new organisational structure, we recommend that GIP be given a stronger executive role, under the leadership of a Director of Information and Communications (the appointment broadened in scope from that of Librarian). We also recommend that a more interactive and highly navigable Parliamentary website should be given high priority as the most cost-effective means of securing increased public engagement in the parliamentary process and fostering close connections with the younger generation, in particular, whose falling turnout at recent elections is a matter of concern.

A theme throughout the report has been responsiveness to Members’ needs, improved communication and the case for a more proactive and ‘customer-facing’ approach by the House Service. This thread runs through Chapter 6 of the report, and is reflected in recommendations covering the Clerks, Library, accommodation services, administration, refreshment and information technology.

We had considered recommending the creation of one-stop shops around the Parliamentary Estate staffed with generalists able to take enquiries from Members and track them through the system on their behalf. We have stopped short of this on grounds of resources, the risk of adding another layer to an already complicated administrative system and the need to avoid confusing the substance of service delivery with presentational gimmicks. Instead the report recommends, or commends, changes in functional areas in order to become more responsive and, where necessary, ‘joined-up’ in serving Members and their staff – for example, the creation of a client relations group for the whole Serjeant at Arms area; benchmarking with external providers in respect of catering; and general use of information technology to provide more effective help and support.
House of Lords

Although not part of our remit, the House of Lords is affected unavoidably by some of our recommendations. Good co-operation already exists between the two Houses. We recommend that, as and when the climate seems right, and once the first ‘bi-cameral’ joint Department (PICT) has proved itself in the future, further joint Departments should be created, in the interests of reducing overhead costs and of general efficiency.

Grants to Inter-parliamentary Associations

There is one small aspect of the House’s activities that is not yet within its full control. It concerns the grants-in-aid for Members’ work with four inter-parliamentary associations. We have made recommendations in respect of these votes, designed to complete the process of bringing under the House’s authority all resources necessary to achieve its purposes, including international co-operation.

Implementation

We recommend that implementation of these recommendations be undertaken by an in-House ad hoc team, reporting in the first instance to the Management Board, which might subsequently be folded into the enlarged Office of the Clerk, re-named Office of the Chief Executive.
1 Introduction

1. The role of Parliament in a modern democracy remains of the highest importance. Key functions of the House of Commons include: acting as an electoral college mechanism for the election of a Government (vital if the outcome of a general election is unclear); authorising taxation, Government spending and the existence of the armed forces; passing legislation, normally in concert with the House of Lords; acting as a forum for national debate; holding Ministers and their Departments to account through scrutiny and challenge; and providing a platform for Members to secure redress for their constituents.

2. Providing the management and services to support these functions is also increasingly complex. There is no single template for what elected Members should do with their time; that will depend largely on whether the Member is a Minister, or holds some other appointment. The Senior Salaries Review Body has attempted to sketch a ‘job description’ for a backbencher, as part of its effort to recommend fair remuneration for a position which has no shortage of applicants at election time, but which many Members would regard as more of a calling than a ‘job’. In practice, the needs of Members are as varied as their number: effectively 646 small businesses, with differing objectives and agendas, different ways of working, for example in the use of IT; and differing emphases as between their work in the Chamber, in their offices in Parliament and in their constituencies.

3. In meeting the needs of the House of Commons, those responsible for the management and services have also to contend with a number of distinctive challenges. Some are inherent in the nature of the Parliamentary environment; others have emerged more recently—

- the fluctuating demand for services, some of it unpredictable, including from one Parliament to the next;

- the physical limitations imposed by the need to operate in an historic palace on a world heritage site, which affects the application of modern working methods;

- the growth in demand for services since Braithwaite’s report: for practically every measure, except the actual number of Members or the number of sitting days, the picture is one of rising numbers (especially of Members’ staff), greater costs and higher expectations;

- to the pre-existing tasks of supporting the House and its Members has been added the new objective of connecting Parliament more effectively with the public;

- above all, there is a political dimension to virtually everything that occurs at Westminster; individual Members can raise minor issues of services to the highest level, including the Floor of the House; acts undertaken as impartial management initiatives can quickly assume unintended political significance.

4. The work of the House Service is therefore susceptible to many pressures and changes. Successful performance calls for the preservation of a special kind of administrative and diplomatic alchemy, as well as the application of modern management techniques and skills.
2 Governance and Management

5. The governance and higher management of the House of Commons have been a main feature of previous reviews. This is unsurprising: the top structure must set the overall framework for management and services in any organisation. In this case, however, it is particularly important to get it right, because of the distinctive way in which the Commons runs itself: it is a system of self-governance, by Members, for Members. Freedom from outside interference reflects the unique position and need of Parliament to exercise control over all the resources necessary to achieve its purpose, in accordance with the constitutional principle of independence from the Executive.

6. We do not question this principle. Indeed, it is salutary to note that a recent Commonwealth Parliamentary Association study placed key emphasis on the financial independence of the Legislature from the Executive. The UK's governance model has also been adapted and adopted by other legislatures, not least in the separate arrangements made for the Northern Ireland Assembly, the Scottish Parliament and the National Assembly for Wales.

7. Self-governance does, however, impose obligations and responsibilities. It has to be reconciled with two other requirements. One is the need to bring a sense of order and priorities to bear on what would otherwise be myriad views and demands for services from Members. The other is the need for wider public accountability. The latter point is particularly important, given that a self-governance model is not fully consistent with what is generally considered to be best practice for running public bodies, in that—

- Members of the House are the customers of the organisation which they themselves govern and supervise;
- they vote their own budgets to meet their service requirements;
- their expertise is usually more as parliamentarians than as experienced managers or administrators;
- their governance role could potentially be at odds with the parliamentary and political domains in which they operate (for example, management initiatives designed to promote efficiency or economy might create controversy spilling over into the political context);
- the time that Members can dedicate to governance is necessarily limited and continuity of attendance and membership of relevant committees is problematic.

8. The challenge, therefore, is to construct an orderly system which preserves the principle of the customer as governor, while meeting the demands of public accountability and transparency, effectiveness and value for money spent.

9. The structure and system that the Commons has evolved for striking this balance involve governance by three main bodies, composed exclusively of Members: the House of Commons Commission; the Finance and Services Committee; and the Administration Committee. These direct, supervise and draw on the services provided by the officials of
the House Service under the Clerk of the House. This Service is itself grouped under a Board of Management, representing each House Department and chaired by the Clerk of the House as Chief Executive. There is also an Audit Committee, chaired by a Commissioner with two external members. Details of these bodies are summarised at Annex 1.

THE BRAITHWAITE PRESCRIPTION

10. Braithwaite made wide-ranging recommendations for the improvement of the governance and management structure. We consider these, and what has happened as a result.

House of Commons Commission

11. The Commission was endorsed as the overall supervisory and policy-making body, with a small and capable membership: Commissioners “with real and extensive knowledge of the House”. The recommendations were designed to enable the Commission to provide stronger strategic leadership, with increased support to discharge this role. These included—

- introduction of an annually updated strategic plan, to provide a policy framework for delivering services, making resource choices and establishing development priorities;

- the receipt of monthly information and performance reports to assist high level monitoring;

- filtering and delegation of less important business to subordinate bodies, of both Members (Finance and Services Committee and Domestic Committees) and officials (Clerk of the House and Board of Management);

- better quality business cases and investment appraisals to inform decisions on major spending proposals;

- improved procedure for the preparation of papers and agendas;

- improved communication of Commission decisions, both to the officials responsible for implementation, as well as to Members more generally.

Finance and Services Committee

12. The Finance and Services Committee was to be given a more focused role in support of the Commission. It would operate as an executive sub-committee of the Commission and help to monitor progress towards performance targets. It would perform ‘non-executive director’ functions in respect of the Board of Management. Its Chairman would act informally as senior point of contact for the other elements in the governance structure, working closely with the Speaker, and being a member of the Commission. It would share minutes of its meetings with the other bodies and review performance management information from the House Service. It would be supported directly by the Secretary to the Commission, “underlining the close relationship between the two bodies”.
Domestic Committees

13. Braithwaite found the operation of the Domestic Committees to be problematic. He made a number of recommendations which sought to pin down respective responsibilities more clearly among the main bodies: overall supervision and policy by the Commission and the Finance and Services Committee; service delivery and policy execution by the Board of Management and Departments; and the Domestic Committees as a channel for customer views on policy and on service provision, acting in an advisory capacity. He also recommended more co-operative working with House officials in the interests of overcoming adversarial relationships that were perceived to exist. Braithwaite’s recommendations have since been overtaken by the revision of the Domestic Committee structure following the 2005 General Election, with the five Committees being consolidated into a single Administration Committee, with an advisory role.

Clerk of the House and Board of Management

14. Recommendations here were in line with management reform in the public sector generally, and with current ‘best practice’. They sought to provide stronger strategic direction; to foster a more corporate organisation and culture; and to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of service delivery. The main organisational proposals were as follows—

- adoption of the strategic framework approved by the Commission within which the Board would operate;
- the Clerk of the House to be given line responsibility for the other Heads of Department, reflected in formal delegations;
- revised delegations to give the Board greater authority over Departmental business;
- the provision of better information, particularly financial and cost data, to assist performance management, underpin strategic decision-taking and measure progress;
- an Office of the Clerk to support the functions of the Clerk of the House, as Chief Executive, and the Board of Management and to co-ordinate business with the governing bodies;
- preparatory and supporting committees, particularly for inter-departmental ‘cross-cutting’ work, to support Board operations and use more generally of cross-departmental project structures and processes;
- a central point for media relations for matters affecting the House Management and Services;
- corporate values and behaviour to be adopted by Board members;
- additional training at all levels of the House Service, from the Board downwards.
WHAT HAS HAPPENED: AN ASSESSMENT

15. Action has been taken on Braithwaite’s recommendations, most of which were implemented in 2000. There have been changes in structure, organisation and process although some of the effects are only now being felt. Staff returning after working elsewhere have commented that the culture or ‘feel’ of the organisation is different from that of the 1990s.

House of Commons Commission

16. The Commission is now supported by an active secretariat with well-prepared papers and agendas. It met on nine occasions in 2006/07. It delegates a certain amount of business to the Board of Management and to the Finance and Services Committee. In that period the Commission agreed the content of the new voter’s guide, subsequently sent personally to each person on their eighteenth birthday and an important part of the House’s plans for connecting Parliament with the public. It has monitored major projects, including the Visitor Reception Building and the access control project for the Parliamentary Estate.

17. Summaries of Commission decisions are communicated to interested parties for implementation or information as appropriate, and published on the Parliamentary internet. The Commission’s Annual Report describes progress towards meeting priorities on the basis of a Strategic Plan, which is a distinct improvement on previous versions which consisted of accounts of individual House Departments’ activities. The current Strategic Plan is intended as a broad framework within which the Board of Management and the House Service operate. It sets out values and purposes, tasks, priorities and financial strategy (albeit without specifying how progress and success will be measured). During the year, the Commission spokesman replied to nine oral questions from Members and gave 282 written answers; there was a debate in Westminster Hall on 19 October 2006 on the Commission’s Annual Report, during which this review was announced.

Finance and Services Committee

18. The Finance and Services Committee functions quietly in support of the Commission. In the past year it scrutinised the House Service’s spending plans and out-turn results; and monitored the financial and administrative implications of particular programmes, such as works, security and catering.

Audit Committee

19. An Audit Committee has been established as a result of Braithwaite’s recommendations. It is chaired by a member of the Commission, and has two independent members, one of them a qualified accountant. The Clerk of the House and the Director of Finance and Administration are not members of the Audit Committee, but attend its meetings. The Audit Committee’s annual reports are published with the Commission’s own Annual Report. PricewaterhouseCoopers has been appointed to work with the House’s Internal Review Service to enhance the House’s internal audit capacity. Given the self-governing nature of the House of Commons, the development of this audit scrutiny, with external elements, has been an important area of progress.
Administration Committee

20. The Administration Committee has adopted a challenging approach to the House Departments over their delivery of services, following the amalgamation of the Domestic Committees after the 2005 election. It provides a forum for Members to press for improvements in the nature and level of service provision. Since its establishment it has produced five reports: Post-Election Services to New Members; the Refreshment Department; Accommodation; Improving Facilities for Educational Visitors to Parliament; and Information and Communication Technology Services to Members. Changes are planned as a result. The Committee operates in a transparent way, with circular e-mail updates to all Members and prompt publication on the Parliamentary internet of full records of its discussions.

Clerk of the House/Chief Executive and Board of Management

21. Changes have been made to assist the Clerk of the House in his role as Chief Executive. He has been given formal authority over individual Heads of Department (although they retain their statutory right of access to the Commission on matters which they consider to be crucial to their Departments). The Office of the Clerk was created in 2000 to support the Chief Executive, Board of Management and subordinate groups. It has been one of the most noticeable and successful changes resulting from Braithwaite. The Clerk of the House holds weekly co-ordination meetings with the Head of the Office of the Clerk (who is Secretary of the Board of Management) and the Secretary of the House of Commons Commission (who is also Clerk of the Finance and Services Committee). A media and communications team has been established in the Office of the Clerk as a central point of contact for media enquiries on management and service matters and to supervise more active promotional work via media officers who are now attached to select committees.

22. The Board of Management now considers House-wide issues, although these are rather narrowly defined: a distinction is made between services delivered by individual Departments — which are not generally regarded as matters for the Board — and services either delivered on a cross-departmental basis, such as information and access for the public, or provided by one Department for all, such as accommodation and IT, which are regarded as corporate.

23. The Board has a corporate risk register and exercises greater authority over management and services generally. It is the acknowledged centre for collective decision-making on management issues. Performance and activity indicators are considered by the Board on a quarterly basis. A House-wide approach is beginning to be adopted to efficiency savings — for example, in procurement. The Corporate Business Plan 2007 pulls together in a common format the various Departmental plans for the development of services to 2011.

24. Following the Braithwaite report, the Board overhauled its working methods and supporting groups were reviewed and reorganised. The House Administrative Information System (HAIS) is improving the quality of data relating to finance, human resources, purchasing and procurement and payroll, aiming at a House-wide ‘single version of the truth’ for management purposes. There is greater consistency of administrative practices across Departments in these areas, reinforced by the implementation of a ‘delegated model’
from the Board, which seeks to reduce duplication and to clarify levels of authority, responsibility and accountability. Underpinning IT infrastructure is being brought together and modernised. Cross-cutting groups are also active in helping to deliver final outputs: for example, the Group on Information for the Public (GIP) is responsible for carrying forward the House Service’s work on connecting Parliament with the public, one of the three primary objectives of the House’s Strategic Plan.

25. The importance of developing more corporate behaviour by Board members is reflected in a Statement of Practice which the Board has adopted. There are initiatives in general management training, cascaded from Board level to other staff — for example, the Senior Management Development Programme. The need for greater movement of staff both between the Departments and through increasing outward secondments is gaining acceptance.

**Other Indicators of Performance**

26. These changes in management, organisation and process are good in themselves, and demonstrate that the House has clearly moved on since Braithwaite reported. They do not, however, equate automatically to improved performance. They are the technical means to achieve ends, not the ends in themselves.

27. Measuring output performance remains problematic in the case of the Commons. This is partly inherent in the nature of the tasks themselves — often demand-led, unpredictable and subject to change at short notice as dictated by political or other circumstances. Self-evidently, the House Service can support the business of Parliament, but cannot itself be held accountable for such key issues as the quantity or quality of legislation passed and success in holding the Executive to account, in debating the most important concerns of the day, in securing redress for constituents and in securing high voter turnout in general elections.

28. We have looked for performance data from other Parliaments and assemblies which face similar problems, but the data are not available in a form that enables useful or reliable comparisons to be made. Government Departments in Whitehall, which face similar difficulties in establishing meaningful targets and measuring success (if not to the same degree), have adopted various methods in recent years — Public Service Agreements, Efficiency Reviews and, now, Capability Reviews. We comment later on the desirability of a stronger performance management system for the House Service.

29. For the present purpose, however, we have been reliant on more general indicators of success and have considered two of these: first, changes in the volume and complexity of the workload placed on the House Service since Braithwaite’s report; and, secondly, the findings of a survey of Members of Parliament and their staff, investigating customer experience and levels of satisfaction with service provision, undertaken during this review.

**Increased Demands**

30. The way in which the House and its Members operate has changed considerably in recent years, bringing with it changes in the scale and complexity of management and service delivery.
31. Although the number of Members has remained broadly constant, there is considerable turnover: 62% of the House’s membership (395 out of the 641 who have taken their seats) were first elected in 1997 or later. The length of a Member’s service can vary widely, from just a few months to fifty years or more, but the average length of service for Members leaving the House over the past twenty years has been 17.8 years; and of those leaving the House since 1987, 28% were Members for less than ten years.

32. More significantly, the number of Members’ staff on the payroll has increased by 35%, from 1,849 at the end of the financial year 1998/99 to 2,493 at the end of 2006/07. The capacity of Members to employ staff is determined by the level of their allowances, which have grown nearly threefold over that period from an office costs allowance of £49,332 in 1998/99 (which had also to cover other office costs including computers) to a staffing allowance of £90,505 in 2007, backed up by the free loan of some computers, an incidental expenses provision of £21,339 and a new Communications Allowance of £10,000.

33. This growth in the number of Members’ staff and the financial resources at Members’ disposal impacts directly on the demands on the support services provided at Westminster and, to an extent (with IT for example), in constituencies. The processing of payments for staff and other costs by the ‘Fees Office’ in the Department of Finance and Administration is one aspect. The output of the Refreshment Department is another indicator of rising demand: whereas in 1988/89 the annual number of meals delivered was 1 million, the figure is now over 1.5 million.

34. The IT transformation has, perhaps, had the greatest impact. The number of research enquiries answered to a deadline by the Library has dropped markedly, from 10,454 in 1998/99 to 6,639 in 2006/07, but the number and range of Standard Notes available over the Parliamentary intranet has increased from just 31 in 1998/99 to 2,813 in 2006/07, reflecting a dramatic growth in self-service by Members and their staff using information technology.

35. At the same time, however, the House Service must continue to provide support for the traditional Parliamentary environment, which retains an ageless emphasis on both the process of debate and the printed word (though nowadays broadcasting and the worldwide web offer new ways to follow proceedings and to access bills and reports). In 1998/99 there were 28,232 pages of Hansard for the Chamber and Committees, including written answers, compared to 34,286 pages in 2006/07.

36. The Parliamentary Estate itself has developed significantly since Braithwaite reported in 1999, placing increased demands on the Department of the Serjeant at Arms. Portcullis House, opened in 2001, provides offices for some 211 Members and their staff together with a wide range of modern services and facilities including committee rooms and refreshment areas. Meanwhile, maintenance of the Victorian Palace of Westminster and its facilities is becoming more challenging.

37. The emphasis on greater interaction with the public affects the House Service in a number of ways. One is the new outreach work with schools and community groups in the UK. Visitor numbers at Westminster have increased. Nearly 16,000 students and teachers visited Parliament in 2006/07 — an increase of 30% over the previous year. The Central Tours Office, which started work in November 2002, has taken over the running of tours
sponsored by Members, bringing in 130,000 visitors — a significant increase on previous years. The summer opening programme, also operated by the Central Tours Office, adds a further 80,000 paying members of the public.

38. Security has always been a concern at Westminster, but the altered nature of the threat has required a different kind of response. Security reviews, following the events of 11 September 2001 and in 2004, have led to significant and sometimes costly changes. Some of these, like the permanent screen in front of the Public Gallery in the Chamber or the steel barriers outside in the street, are readily apparent; others are not.

39. In terms of front line ‘output’, the Select Committee on Modernisation of the House of Commons has produced a number of reports since 1997 which have had a considerable impact on the work of the House: the Westminster Hall debating chamber, programming and carry-over of Bills, greater pre-legislative scrutiny, more certainty in the Parliamentary calendar and changes in sitting hours. It also produced the landmark report on Connecting Parliament with the Public, which is dealt with in more detail below.

40. These changes have had a corresponding effect on the work of the House Service. However, the number of Bills receiving Royal Assent each year has not shown a significant increase since 1997, compared to the previous ten years. The number of select committee meetings has remained high while their output in terms of published reports has been rising: 1,181 select committee meetings and 120 reports from departmentally-related select committees in 1998/99 compared to 1,173 meetings and 203 such reports in 2006/07. A variety of innovative working methods have also been brought to select committee proceedings during this period, and additional efforts devoted to promoting public knowledge of what they do.

41. The average number of questions dealt with by the Table Office each sitting day has risen from 349 in 1998/99 to 605 in 2006/07, while the number of written answers published in Hansard has escalated from 36,630 in 1998/99 to 63,451 in 2006/07.

42. It is not, however, possible to confirm that productivity of the House Service as a whole has risen proportionately over the period. This is partly because the House of Commons Service has also grown, from a complement of 1,419 at the end of 1998/99 to an average full-time equivalent of 1,606 in 2006/07, an increase of around 13%. This is attributable partly to the creation of PICT to provide improved IT services, for which there is rapidly rising demand by Members and their staff, and partly to the increased staff needed in the Clerk’s Department to support select committees. Elsewhere staff levels have remained broadly constant or, in the case of the Refreshment Department, fallen slightly.

Satisfaction Levels

43. Coincidentally with the beginning of this review, the House of Commons commissioned a survey of services which sought the views of Members and Members’ staff on their experiences of, and levels of satisfaction with, the current provision by the House of Commons Service. The response rate among Members was 45%.

44. The survey reports that, in the opinion of 39% of Members responding, House of Commons services have become more effective in recent years, with only 10% saying that
services had become less effective, while the majority (52%) felt that the effectiveness of services had not changed significantly.

45. In terms of governance and management, however, satisfaction levels were lower. The House of Commons Commission was regarded as not very or not at all effective by 34% of Members replying to the question; 46% regarded the Commission as fairly effective, with 21% regarding the Commission as very or extremely effective. Satisfaction with the performance of the Board of Management showed a similar pattern: 26% not very or not at all satisfied, 50% fairly satisfied and 24% very or extremely satisfied.

46. On most of the House of Commons Service’s three primary objectives and six supporting tasks, most Members felt that the emphasis should be kept about the same. There were two exceptions: 43% of Members called for more emphasis on promoting public knowledge and understanding of the work and role of Parliament through the provision of information and access; and 45% of Members thought that more attention and resources should be devoted to exploiting technology more effectively (substantial dissatisfaction with aspects of IT being evident from the survey).

47. Courtesy of staff was an issue raised with us during the course of the review. It is therefore interesting to note that more than two-thirds of Members replying were extremely or very satisfied with the courtesy of staff, which scored consistently highly across the Service: Library 92%, Official Report 91%, Vote Office 91%, select committee staff 91%, DFA enquiry and advice telephone line 88%, Table Office 85%, PICT Service Desk 79%, telephone switchboard 76%, Refreshment Department 73%, Works and Services staff 70% and House of Commons security staff 67%.

48. A general cautionary note should be added. Surveys of this kind can provide useful data for the providers of services, in terms of setting baselines for new targets aimed at raising standards, improving communications and re-assessing priorities. More regular sampling is, however, needed for these to be reliable indicators of improved performance (the last such survey being in 2003). Moreover, the latest survey did not address the further issues of efficiency and value for money.

ISSUES REMAINING AND THE WAY AHEAD

49. It is evident that the House Service has had to meet the challenge of additional tasks and new demands. The feedback from the 2007 survey has also been generally positive. Much of the Braithwaite agenda has been implemented, organisationally and in terms of process and systems. Nevertheless, the impression we have gained from our review and from the extensive interviews we have conducted is that more can, and should, be done both to realise the objectives of the Ibbs and Braithwaite reports and to fulfil the current aspirations of both Members and House officials.

50. Some problems result from slow implementation of certain of Braithwaite’s recommendations; others from implementation that has occurred more in letter than in spirit, with pre-existing practices continuing alongside the intended reforms. Effective strategic direction of a corporate and well-managed Service to produce highly efficient services has been hampered by a number of factors. Some are inherent in the nature of the Parliamentary process which can frustrate the best-laid plans; others are the result of
factors that can be addressed, including the governance structure of Members and the strength of the federal and compartmentalised culture that still exists within the House Service.

**House of Commons Commission**

51. The Commission remains largely invisible in the eyes of most Members and is not seen as giving a clear lead. This may not be a deficiency in principle: provided management of business and services runs smoothly, the machinery and processes that produce them should not need to be visible to the front line or divert Members from concentrating on their primary political purposes. Visibility does, however, become an issue when, as now, there is dissatisfaction among some Members with the services provided to them and a sense that the House is not being run to serve their interests as it should. This perception is misplaced. In our view, it results more from the impact caused by the increase in the number of Members’ staff and officials than from weakness in the governance structure itself. We have been impressed by the way in which the Commission operates and discharges business, together with its accountability to Members through questions answered by the Commission spokesman throughout the year and an annual debate. Nevertheless, the Commission still has something of an image problem.

52. The Commission’s role is also not as strategic as was envisaged. Part of this reflects the way proposals come to it from the various subordinate bodies and Departments, with minor items of business alongside issues of major priority which legitimately require its attention. Meeting at monthly intervals (with longer gaps during recesses) means that agendas are inevitably crowded.

**Finance and Services Committee**

53. Braithwaite’s proposals in this area were not fully adopted when the report was implemented in 2000 and questions about the role and scope of this Committee persist. It has not operated as the executive sub-committee of the Commission, scrutinising the financial aspects of all proposals made by the Administration Committee or House officials before they reach the Commission and ensuring that the Commission receives fully co-ordinated advice. Nor does the Finance and Services Committee receive a regular report from the House Service on progress towards performance targets in the way recommended by Braithwaite.

54. To some extent, the Finance and Services Committee appears less effective than it is, since full records of its proceedings are circulated only to management and those needing to know. Wider distribution would help transparency and secure greater appreciation of the Committee’s role; it would, however, also risk exposure of often sensitive financial data, which ought to remain confidential.

55. The main issue is one of substance: the Finance and Services Committee does not provide as full an underpinning of the Commission as was envisaged. This, together with the uncertainty about the Committee’s role, affects governance of the Commons more generally, including in containing rising cost pressures and in establishing priorities among proposals arising from Members or the House Service.
Audit Committee

56. Chairmanship of the Audit Committee by a member of the Commission, although undertaken with complete integrity and diligence, is not fully consistent with the principle of external scrutiny; there is also a relative lack of value-for-money audits by the National Audit Office.

Administration Committee

57. The Administration Committee was created at the outset of the new Parliament in 2005 on the basis that the concentration of the previous five Domestic Committees into one would produce a more effective Member voice in influencing decisions on the services provided for and by the House. The Committee has, however, yet to settle down fully into its role.

58. When it began operating, the Committee adopted a somewhat adversarial approach, more appropriate to Public Accounts Committee scrutiny of Government Departments than to the relationship between Members and the providers of services to them. The partnership and co-operative working which Braithwaite envisaged between Member representative groups and the House Service was missing.

59. The replacement of individual Domestic Committees by a single body has also meant a loss of the detailed engagement that Members on these former Committees had in the work of the individual House Departments, each of them having covered a specific function (Accommodation and Works, Administration, Broadcasting, Catering and Information).

60. At the same time, some Members on the Administration Committee are frustrated in their work as an advisory, rather than an executive, body and feel that its views on improvement of services are not sufficiently heeded.

61. More generally it is evident that the close co-ordination and co-operation between the Administration Committee, the Finance and Services Committee and the Board of Management is not taking place, at least not to the degree that Braithwaite envisaged and with less satisfactory results as far as Members are concerned.

Clerk of the House and Board of Management

62. The executive body in the governance structure — Clerk of the House/Chief Executive, Board of Management, Departments — has clearly moved in the direction recommended by Braithwaite. But there is a sense, not least among several senior officials themselves, that the transition to a more professionally managed and integrated House Service has been slower than expected and needs reinforcement. There are various aspects to this, some of which raise issues that go beyond Braithwaite’s prescription—

- the Board of Management tends still to behave as a voluntary association of the Heads of individual Departments, rather than a corporate body willing and able to give direction to the functional Departments;
the Clerk of the House remains the Head of one of the component Departments as well as acting as Chief Executive across all Departments;

the Office of the Clerk has yet to develop beyond a co-ordinating secretariat, to provide the Chief Executive with an enforcement capability for corporate policies, decisions and performance;

there is room to improve the strategic role of the Board with decisions taken on the basis of the collective interest and overall priorities;

there is a gap, between the broad objectives and aspirational goals in the Corporate Plan and the detailed individual Departmental Business Plans, that needs to be filled by a more business-like strategy, which defines success and shows how progress towards it can be measured;

related to the above, a performance management system necessary for the Commission and Board to monitor delivery of objectives has still to be put in place, underpinned by better management and financial data;

coordination between Departments to deliver House-wide cross-cutting business, and implement agreed policies and practices, though good in itself, still requires elaborate and time-consuming consultation and negotiation;

the proliferation of co-ordinating groups detracts from the efficient conduct of business;

the devolved nature of common professional support elements in the structure — finance, human resources, procurement, general management — raises issues of coherence, economy and efficiency; and there is evidence of overlap and competition in planning and communication functions between Departments.

THE CLIMATE FOR FURTHER CHANGE

63. There are a variety of further measures that could be adopted, processes and systems put in place, organisational changes made and tools employed. They have been implemented widely in Whitehall Departments in the context of ‘Modernising Government’ over the past decade.

64. There is, however, a prior question to be answered. This concerns the rationale for such further management change and whether the case for it will be recognised and supported by the House of Commons Service and senior Member bodies. There is some resistance here, for a number of reasons, not only from those who have a vested interest in protecting turf under the present devolved structure. First, the existing federal (or quasi-corporate) system of management does work, well in some areas, particularly in ensuring through the Clerk’s Department that support to the ‘front line’ outputs of the House, the Chamber and its Committees, is delivered to high standards. Secondly, it is argued that further improvements needed in the main area of concern — the underpinning management and services structure — could be achieved through the present arrangements focused at the Departmental level. There is also a view that the nature of the business — often operating reactively, in a highly political environment — does not lend itself to a thorough-going
application of modern management techniques (with their emphasis on clarity of objectives, target-setting and performance management).

65. It is also the case that the House of Commons Service has not experienced the same level of external pressures experienced by Government Departments or commercial organisations in recent years, whether from resource constraints, demands for improved quality of public services, or changes in the marketplace. There is no similar compulsion or ‘burning platform’ to implement management reform.

66. If further change is to succeed, therefore, it will need to be accompanied by a recognition by staff, both collectively and individually, of the need for it, and a determination to implement recommendations wholeheartedly.

67. While the pace and precise nature of measures should be tailored to the unique nature of Parliament and its requirements, the overall direction will need to be signalled clearly by the Commission, the Chief Executive, the Management Board and Heads of Department.

68. We believe, on the basis of the extensive discussions held during this review and our assessment of them, that there is general support for a more corporate and business-like approach to the way the House Service is run; that services at present delivered effectively to Parliament should also be performed as efficiently as possible; and that the House also needs the flexibility to move resources around the system — human as well as financial — to meet future challenges.

69. The rationale for doing so is axed on three ‘R’s—

- the Reputation of the House of Commons as a self-governing institution, able to withstand detailed scrutiny of its governance and management;

- Responsiveness to the needs of Members and others for services of a quality that meet recognised standards of best practice;

- Resource considerations and the need to ensure that the budget available is used rigorously in support of the House’s defined objectives and priorities, as distinct from the preferences of individual Departments.

70. Our consideration of further measures and conclusions on recommendations are framed accordingly.

**OPTIONS AND CONCLUSIONS**

*House of Commons Commission*

71. Proposals have been made by Members, during our consultations, for changes in the composition of the Commission’s membership and the way it is decided. This is in the interests of transparency and a greater sense of ‘ownership’ by Members of their governing body. The Speaker takes the chair of the Commission — inescapably, since he both presides over the business in the Chamber and heads the administration and management of the House, the two being inextricably linked. The Act of 1978 also prescribes that two of the members of the Commission are *ex officio*: the Leader of the House and a person
appointed by the Leader of the Opposition (the Shadow Leader of the House). This leaves three further positions for Members to be nominated by the House. In practice, the House has always agreed to the nominations on the Order Paper, comprising one Member from each of the three main parties. This method of appointment is at once completely transparent, as the motions are on the Floor of the House, with guaranteed debating time available, but also obscure, as the names emerge through the ‘usual channels’.

72. An alternative might be for the three non-ex officio posts to be filled by ballot within each of the three leading parties or to extend membership by this method. The result could strengthen the sense of ‘ownership’ of the Commission’s decisions on the part of Members. On the other hand, it could weaken the sense of direction, unity and impartial governance which the present Commission exhibits, especially if ‘elected’ Members were to operate as delegates rather than governors. For this reason, we do not recommend a change to the present arrangements.

73. A further proposal made during the review has been the appointment of external advisers to assist the Commission, analogous to the way in which other public bodies, including Government Departments in Whitehall, have brought non-executive directors onto their Boards, with successful results. Such an arrangement might help to overcome the central paradox of the customer as governor in ‘good practice’ terms. It could also improve continuity and provide new managerial insights. On the other hand, it could be seen as running counter to the principle of self-governance. There are also the internal and sensitive political issues with which the Commission must inevitably deal. Moreover, an increase in the size of the Commission could weaken the commitment of the present membership to contribute fully to the Commission’s proceedings. On balance, we do not recommend the appointment of non-executives to the Commission (although we see a role for them elsewhere in the structure).

74. One appropriate way of strengthening the external element in governance, and improving the level of external scrutiny, would be for the external members to have a greater role on the Audit Committee and be seen to set the audit agenda. This could be achieved by making one of the present external members the Chairman of the Committee, in line with best practice in other organisations. The change would provide also for greater continuity than can be expected under present arrangements. We recommend that a suitably qualified external member of the Audit Committee should become its Chairman. We further recommend that a rolling programme of NAO value-for-money audits should be instituted.

75. As regards a more strategic role for the Commission, it might be easier for the Commission to achieve this — and discharge business generally — were it to meet more frequently than on a monthly basis. This would, however, be an unrealistic expectation given the other pressures on the time available to its members. An alternative — and one which we favour — is to facilitate the leadership role by making changes elsewhere in the structure: first, the introduction of an effective performance management system, by which management can be held to account by the governing bodies in delivering services according to the priorities they set; and, secondly, revisiting Braithwaite’s recommendations in respect of the role of the Finance and Services Committee, so that it operates with wider delegated powers in more direct support of the Commission.
**Finance and Services Committee**

76. One argument put to us is that the collapsing of the previous five House Committees into the Administration Committee has undermined the case for retaining a separate Finance and Services Committee as a prioritising filter, and that, in the interests of streamlining, the Finance and Services Committee should now be folded into the Administration Committee to form one integrated Member forum to advise the Commission. Against this, however, is the more basic point that there are two different roles to be performed: policy advice on services in the interest of Members; and safeguarding the interest of the House as an institution, including control of its finances. These distinctions should continue to be reflected in organisational structure.

77. For this reason, we believe that the Finance and Services Committee should be retained, with a modified function that enlarges its role rather than removes it. It would strengthen the role of the Commission, and the governance structure in general, if the Finance and Services Committee were to have wider delegated powers to operate in more active support of the Commission’s work. This would free up the Commission to exercise more strategic leadership. In cases where there might be differences over expenditure proposals — for example, between the Administration Committee and the Management Board — the Finance and Services Committee’s involvement would ensure that these were reconciled, or at least fully exposed, before the Commission considered the matter, and so bring Members’ views fully to bear on decisions about services in a considered way. With good organisation of respective agendas by the secretariat, this should expedite business, rather than add another layer of bureaucracy or delay. **We recommend that the Finance and Services Committee should operate more as an arm of the Commission, acting under a clear mandate giving the Committee substantial authority on the Commission’s behalf to cover the more routine supervisory issues.**

78. **We further recommend that the Finance and Services Committee should be mandated to scrutinise proposals made by Member Committees or House officials, where these need to be reconciled, before they are considered by the Commission.**

79. Mr Speaker has three Deputy Speakers to assist him in the Chamber, but none of them is involved significantly in the management and services of the House. In the interests of bringing further experienced and respected views to bear on governance issues, it could be of benefit for a Deputy Speaker to sit on the Finance and Services Committee. When the present Chairman of the Finance and Services Committee’s term comes to an end, consideration should also be given to appointing a Deputy Speaker to that position. The deciding criterion for Chairmanship should be the best means of linking up the Commission, Finance and Services Committee, Administration Committee and officials most effectively. **We recommend that the Chairman of Ways and Means should be appointed to the Finance and Services Committee.**

**Audit Committee**

80. The membership of the Finance and Services Committee could also be a source of strengthening for the Audit Committee. Under present arrangements it has only four members. **We recommend that a member of the Finance and Services Committee,**
selected on the basis of interest and experience, should be appointed to the Audit Committee, ‘balanced’ by an additional external member.

**Administration Committee**

81. The Administration Committee is settling into a structured overview of activities across the House Service and constructive engagement with officials on the Board of Management. The Committee has expressed its wish not to return to the pre-2005 position, with separate groups monitoring individual functions. We would not seek to reverse the 2005 integration of Domestic Committees, but closer links between Members of the Committee and individual Departments would nevertheless be beneficial. **We recommend that individual Members on the Administration Committee should be invited to track particular services — for example, catering or IT — on behalf of the Committee as a whole.**

82. The size of the membership of the Administration Committee (sixteen Members: nine Labour, five Conservative, one Liberal Democrat, one Scottish Nationalist), and to a lesser extent of the Finance and Services Committee (up to eleven Members: currently six Labour, three Conservative, one Liberal Democrat), presents a dilemma. On the one hand, there is concern to have a sufficiently large pool of Members to ensure that there is a quorum for meetings; on the other hand, the possibility that this provides for spasmodic attendance may increase the risk that Members may not take the task fully seriously. In our view, a reduction in the size of membership of both bodies may increase their effectiveness. **We recommend that the size of membership of the Administration Committee and of the Finance and Services Committee should be reviewed, on the basis that smaller bodies of Committee members are likely to be more effective.**

83. We do not recommend an executive, as opposed to advisory, role for the Administration Committee given the case for clarity in the governance structure as to who is responsible for what. But it would facilitate the task of the Committee, as well as the Finance and Services Committee and the Commission, were the House to adopt a performance management system which expressed strategic objectives in more concrete form than in the present Corporate Business Plan, focusing on priorities and enabling progress towards them to be measured. Such a system would enable the Administration Committee to focus its own monitoring and views more effectively.

**Clerk of the House/Chief Executive**

84. In our view, the main focus of change should be at the level of the Board of Management. It has been suggested to us that the single most beneficial reform — and salutary shock to the system — would be to appoint a Chief Executive from outside to run the House Service as a whole in a more business-like manner. It is argued that the person who becomes Clerk of the House, by virtue of that individual’s qualities, experience and expertise as a procedural/legal specialist, is not best placed to take on the broader management and leadership role that a Chief Executive is required to perform.

85. While this proposition has a certain force, it was not accepted by Ibbs or Braithwaite. We have come to the same conclusion as they did, for the reasons set out below.
86. The role of the Chief Executive, in business or government, is to be responsible for the delivery of the front line outputs of the organisation, as well as for the enabling services which underpin them. Much of the front line output of the House of Commons Service lies in the Chamber of the House and its Committees — the domain where the Clerk of the House is the pre-eminent expert. It is highly unlikely that any external candidate could be found with sufficient procedural and parliamentary expertise to perform this function, as well as having the normal Chief Executive competences.

87. A separate Chief Executive would, as a consequence, be responsible mainly for support services and facilities management. This would divide the leadership roles between Clerk of the House and Chief Executive in an organisation which is, arguably, already over-compartmentalised and in need of greater corporate unity and direction.

88. The political environment of the Commons, within which the Chief Executive would need to fit, would also impose constraints. Since the Speaker combines the two roles of presiding over the Chamber and over management and services, the two intertwined, he would, inescapably tend to rely for advice on both aspects from the official with whom he has most to deal on a daily basis — and that is the Clerk of the House. Moreover, the self-governing nature of the Commons, where so much is also political, would constrain a Chief Executive, brought in from outside, from exercising the degree of control that such an individual would expect to have in order to deliver objectives. It would not be an attractive position to take. **We therefore recommend that the Clerk of the House should continue to perform the dual role of Clerk of the House and Chief Executive/Accounting Officer.**

89. It is however, important that the individual appointed to the post should have the requisite tools and skills which in future should include having senior management experience, as well as expertise in Parliamentary procedure. This should almost certainly mean having spent a period outside the Clerk’s Department and preferably beyond the confines of Westminster. A parallel case is the way in which Permanent Secretaries in Whitehall have been broadened in recent years, through training and development, from being primarily policy advisers and administrators to becoming corporate and operational managers. Of fifty such appointees in the last ten years, over two-thirds had had traditional civil service backgrounds, as distinct from private sector or managerial upbringings, and had developed managerial competences in the course of their civil service careers. **We recommend that succession planning at the most senior level should address the need for potential Clerks of the House/Chief Executives to gain senior management experience.**

90. There would also be merit in greater transparency over the appointment, in line with the procedure for other senior appointments in the public sector. This would help to add to the standing of the position. **We recommend that the method of appointment for the Clerk of the House/Chief Executive should, in future, be by means of competition, open to the (inevitably limited) group of suitably qualified candidates, with a Selection Board similar to those employed for Permanent Secretaries to Government Departments.**

91. Permanent Secretaries have found it helpful, in developing their leadership and management roles, to take advantage of one-on-one mentoring or coaching, a practice
employed by a number of Chief Executives in the business world. We commend this similarly for the Clerk of the House.

92. A number of other steps relating to organisation and process should also be taken to strengthen the position of the Clerk of the House in his leadership role as Chief Executive and Chairman of the Management Board. These would also serve the purpose of improving the corporate direction and management of the House Service as a whole.

**Office of the Chief Executive**

93. Creation of the Office of the Clerk has been a success. This should now be built on, so that the Office takes on a larger role in supporting the totality of the Chief Executive's functions. In addition to ‘trouble-shooting’ and chasing up the implementation of agreed action that has run into difficulty or obstruction, the role of the Office should be expanded, particularly to include planning and performance management. There will need to be close co-ordination between a re-named Office of the Chief Executive and the Department of Finance and Administration. The Department of Finance and Administration should have responsibility for the costing information on which much of the performance management system will depend. But the rationale for proposing that these roles should be performed by the new Office of the Chief Executive, under the Chief Executive’s immediate authority, is that this would underline the corporate nature of these functions, making it clear that they are beyond the responsibility of any individual House Department. It would also help to clarify a degree of confusion which exists at present over the responsibility for strategy and planning, where there is some evidence of (unintended) competition between Departments and overlapping activity.

94. For similar reasons, the Office should also take on a stronger role in respect of internal communications with Members and their staff, as well as with the House Service itself. The objective is for information to be more ‘joined-up’ and coherent than is currently possible with seven Departments acting separately. Discussions conducted during this review have shown that Members remain inadequately informed of services available or of issues involving them. Increased standardisation of the format and style of Departmental information and more co-ordinated timing and delivery would help to overcome the overload in the present system and ensure that the key messages get through better. This will require close co-ordination with others, notably PICT and the Library.

95. In order to enable the Clerk of the House to optimise the allocation of time between his procedural functions and the Chief Executive role, he should delegate to the Head of the Office of the Chief Executive responsibility for co-ordinating the work of Departments in delivering agreed objectives.

96. **We recommend that the scope of the activities of the Office of the Chief Executive should be expanded to embrace planning and performance management functions in relation to the House Service’s objectives and targets, together with an increased communication co-ordination role.**

97. An expanded Office of the Chief Executive will require the appointment of a senior figure to lead it, the weight of the task probably justifying grading at SCS Band 2, who is able to command respect throughout the House Departments, with a strengthening of
supporting staff, selected from across the House Service. In order to complement the skills and experience of the Clerk of the House/Chief Executive himself, it would be desirable for the Head of the Office to have a background in management and delivery.

98. The post needs to be filled by someone with the ability and authority to act on the Chief Executive’s behalf as and when called by him to do so. **We recommend that the Office of the Chief Executive’s staffing numbers should be increased, and that the post of the Head of the Office should be upgraded, in the light of these additional functions and responsibilities.**

**Delegations**

99. Delegations from the Clerk of the House/Chief Executive to Departmental Heads were changed after the Braithwaite report. There is now also a ‘delegated model’ rolled out over the past three years, specifying the respective responsibilities of the centre and Departments in respect of finance, procurement and HR functions. These may need to be amended in the light of this report. But aside from the question of the precise extent of delegation, we see merit in pinning down more clearly the relationship between the governance structure and Departments responsible for delivery. **We recommend that, in future, each Head of Department should receive an annual delegation letter, setting out the objectives and targets to be achieved during the year, the budget allocation for the purpose and the common policies, systems and processes to be used and observed in delivery.** The letters should be signed by the Clerk of the House as Chief Executive, ideally jointly with the Speaker and Chairman of the Finance and Services Committee.

**Performance Management**

100. A major conclusion of this report is that the House Service would benefit from a more developed performance management system, to improve its collective ability to track performance against main objectives, priorities and targets. A basic framework is in place, with the three primary objectives and six supporting tasks in the Strategic Plan 2006-2011; some costing and performance information is available. But the definition of what successful performance would look like, and how progress toward it can be measured convincingly, remains elusive. Three steps are involved—

- greater specificity of the House Service’s outputs or outcomes in a form that is measurable;
- robust costings of the House’s functions and services based, where possible, on outputs;
- a system which brings the various elements together in a way which makes it easier for the governing bodies to monitor progress and provide direction.

101. As regards greater specificity of outputs or outcomes (‘what success would look like’), the task of defining them could be part of the Management Board’s own corporate development, to be worked up during away days, with external facilitation and with the participation of one or more members of the House of Commons Commission. Included among the targets could be improved service delivery standards, based on satisfaction levels derived initially from the recent survey of the views of Members and Members’ staff.
Progress could be measured by more regular surveys than at present or by use of representative Members’ focus groups, assembled perhaps with the help of the Administration Committee. Another area might be to set financial efficiency targets: for example a 5% efficiency challenge House-wide on running costs, the ‘saving’ to be redistributed by the Commission and the Management Board to higher corporate priorities. The two approaches could be combined.

102. On costings, the basic financial information systems are now in place and the production of the material should not be difficult, given appropriate direction by the Management Board.

103. For the performance management system itself, the use of the Balanced Scorecard to bring the various elements together has proved successful elsewhere, especially in organisations where outputs are complex and cannot be reduced to simple financial data. The technique was pioneered in the UK by the Ministry of Defence and has since been adopted by a number of Government Departments. The benefits which we envisage of this particular approach are—

- in addition to measuring progress towards objectives, the Scorecard also assists strategy-making – i.e. the identification of areas where new initiatives or policies are required, or areas where action needs to be taken to manage growing risk;

- it provides a framework within which competing activities — evident in the House Service’s existing structure — could be prioritised;

- it can be used to set and monitor local priorities as well as corporate objectives, each Department having its own scorecard, which mirrors and feeds into the corporate version;

- its method of bringing together a variety of aggregated performance information in a relatively simple and consistent format would make it easy for quarterly or half-yearly progress reports to be shared with the Commission, the Finance and Services Committee and the Administration Committee, thereby bringing added corporate ‘glue’ to the House structure.

104. Developing this Scorecard — a task, we suggest, for the Office of the Chief Executive supported by the Department of Finance and Administration — will, however, be technically demanding. Experience has shown elsewhere that it takes up to two years before the measures and targets are refined and the system moves from being a useful description of ongoing activity to becoming a real strategic tool for Management.

105. We recommend that the House Service should adopt a performance management system based on the Balanced Scorecard and with clear criteria for achieving success, drawn up by the Management Board and the House of Commons Commission.

106. We also recommend that one such success criterion should be improved Members’ satisfaction with services, measured by more regular ‘rolling’ surveys of a proportion of Members.
107. We further recommend that the performance management system should be underpinned by an activity and functional costing system, together with benchmarking against ‘peer’ organisations and areas.

**Balanced Scorecard for the House of Commons (illustration)**

**Balanced Scorecard**

**House of Commons: Overview**

*Are we fit for today’s challenges and ready for tomorrow’s tasks?*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Purpose (Stakeholders - what do they want from us? How will we know we are providing it?)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>A House:</strong> To provide advice and services to the House and its Committees.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>B Members:</strong> To provide advice and services to individual Members and their staff.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>C Parliament:</strong> To promote public knowledge and understanding of the work and role of Parliament.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Are we using our resources to best effect?*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Resources (What do we want to do with our resources? How will we know we are using them effectively and efficiently?)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>D People:</strong> Ensure we have the skilled and motivated workforce we need.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>E Finance:</strong> Manage resources to a high standard and achieve value for money.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>F Estate:</strong> Maintain the heritage and integrity of the Palace of Westminster and other buildings, objects and documents for the benefit of future generations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>G Reputation:</strong> Help people to understand the work of Parliament.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*What is our target? Supporting democracy through parliament and representing the United Kingdom population*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Enabling Processes (What do we need to do to deliver what our stakeholders want? How do we know we are delivering this?)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>H People Management:</strong> Manage and invest in our people to give of their best.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>I Health &amp; Safety:</strong> Provide a healthy, safe and secure environment for Members, their staff, House staff, contractors and visitors.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>J Support services:</strong> Manage supporting services so that they enable the business of the House to be effectively conducted.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>K Business Management:</strong> Deliver improved ways of working.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>L Partnerships:</strong> Maintain a good working relationship with the House of Lords.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Are we building for future success?*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Potential (What skills/technology do we need to improve our delivery? How will we know we are doing this?)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>M People Development:</strong> Develop the skills and professional expertise we need for tomorrow.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>N Efficiency and Change:</strong> Develop flexible and efficient organisations and processes to support the House of Commons.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>O Information:</strong> Manage information and technology effectively.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Role, Composition and Size of the Management Board

108. The composition of the present Board of Management ensures that each Department is represented, in line with the federal structure of the House Service. It is accordingly inclusive (although important functions such as Estates and Works are already not directly represented on the Board). However, this approach encourages a sense that the role of Board members is primarily to represent their own Departmental interests, rather than to provide corporate management.

109. An alternative structure would be to create a new Management Board which would group Departments (and re-designate titles) in accordance with main House objectives (and synergies) as follows—

- Clerk of the House/Chief Executive and Chairman: No Departmental role at Board level
- Chief Operating Officer: Principal Deputy in the Clerk’s Department, also covering the Official Report
- Director of Facilities and Support: Serjeant at Arms, covering Refreshment Department as well as present responsibilities (security, works/estates, office services)
- Director of Information and Communications: Librarian, also covering PICT issues in the Commons
- Director of Finance and Administration
- Director of Human Resources: Reflecting the importance of the HR function
- Two external members

110. The advantage of such an approach is that it would provide closer alignment to final outputs, focus more on strategic direction and corporate behaviour and, with a smaller group, ease the task of the Clerk of the House/Chief Executive in moving business forward. It would also facilitate the addition of external members.

111. There are, however, potential downsides. The performance of the Department of the Official Report is highly regarded by Members; the Head of the Refreshment Department brings the most commercial experience to the House Service; and the Director of PICT is engaged in the transformation of information and communications across the whole structure. Nor would a slimmed-down Board on these lines be helpful for diversity objectives. There is therefore a temptation to recommend that the changes should be phased in slowly, as current incumbents move on. This, however, is not a wholly viable option, given the lack of mobility in the House Service senior structure (outside the Clerk’s Department) and the extended period of time that individuals are obliged to remain in post. Moreover PICT is already in an anomalous position and, without any change, its
Head is involved in three different Boards — Commons, Lords and the Joint Business Systems Board.

112. We therefore recommend that the changes to the composition of the Management Board should be made soon, but with appropriate action taken to ensure that it is not perceived as downgrading the importance of the services provided by those no longer 'on the Board' or their Departments. It should be made clear, therefore, that the Departmental structure itself (and cross-cutting groups) remains in place. Those Heads of Department no longer permanent Management Board members should also attend meetings for relevant business, for example quarterly performance reviews.

113. We recommend that a more strategic Management Board with a slimmed-down executive membership should be created, to comprise: the Clerk of the House/Chief Executive; Deputy Clerk/Chief Operating Officer; Serjeant at Arms/Director of Facilities and Support; Librarian/Director of Information and Communications; Director of Finance and Administration; and Director of Human Resources.

Non-Executive Directors

114. With the Management Board reduced to six executive members, it also becomes easier to consider the appointment of non-executive directors (in practice, external advisers) without creating an oversized group. The addition of external advisers is in any case likely to prove beneficial, in providing fresh perspectives and highly experienced advice in running complex organisations. They can bring a healthy element of ‘challenge’ to proceedings, over and above what can be achieved by the internal ‘friendly’ arrangement currently employed.

115. The prestige of the House of Commons is such that it should not prove difficult to find distinguished individuals prepared to serve in this way. Experience elsewhere, for example in Government Departments that have gone down this route in the past, suggests that two rather than one non-executive director should be brought on board; in this case one from the private sector with high level financial and service delivery expertise, the other from the public sector.

116. We recommend that two external advisers (non-executive directors) should be appointed to the Management Board, in the expectation that this will prove as successful as it has in Government Departments, in supporting the role of the Chief Executive, as well as in helping the Management Board more generally.

Management of Change

117. A more strategic Management Board will have a leading role in managing the process of change. In the interests of reinforcing and speeding up implementation, individual Management Board members should, in addition to their general Departmental tasks, have responsibility for delivering House-wide objectives on behalf of the Management Board as a whole. They should act as senior responsible owners (SROs) for cross-cutting final outputs (the connecting Parliament with the public agenda), or as process owners for improved ways of working affecting all Departments. In one sense this only makes explicit what is already happening through the second and third tier groups which have been
created for ‘cross-cutting’ business. The difference is that Management Board members as SROs or process owners would have the authority to override obstacles to progress within individual Departments on the basis of the collective mandate from the Management Board, should consensus not otherwise be possible. There would be no barrier to a Head of Department not permanently on the Management Board holding an SRO or Process Owner position, should this be appropriate, and the Management Board so mandate.

House of Commons corporate model

118. We recommend that individual Heads of Department should have responsibility for delivering agreed cross-cutting objectives or processes on behalf of the Management Board as a whole, acting as senior responsible owners or process owners, on the basis of wide powers granted by the Management Board.

119. As regards the totality of co-ordinating and cross-cutting groups, however, these have proliferated and have tended to make the business of management more complicated that it should be, as well as taking up a great time of time for the staff involved. Some are worthwhile and should be retained; others are not serving a useful role and should be closed down in the interests of simplification. We recommend that co-ordinating and cross-cutting groups should be reviewed with the objective of reducing their number and maintaining control over growth in future.
3 Finance and Resources

Financial Planning and Management

120. Braithwaite recommended that financial disciplines and processes should be strengthened across the House Service and that better financial data should be generated to underpin the introduction of a performance management system. He also recommended a more corporate approach to finance (and HR) services in the interests of efficiency.

121. Much has been done since then to improve matters. This has included the introduction of customer/supplier arrangements between the Department of Finance and Administration and the other House Departments, an extensive training programme for finance staff, the creation of cross-departmental ‘practitioner’ groups in finance and procurement, the new House Administrative Information System (HAIS) and implementation of a so-called ‘delegated model’.

122. Under the delegated model, the respective responsibilities of central and local finance functions were made explicit and agreed corporately, with the presumption that they would be applied across the Commons. Coupled with the HAIS programme, there should be three main benefits—

- improved quality (accuracy, timeliness and consistency) of data on finance, purchasing, procurement and payroll, aiming for ‘a single version of the truth’ for management and control purposes;
- efficiency gains from removal of duplication between the Department of Finance and Administration and the other House Departments in producing, reporting and verifying data;
- clarification of authority, responsibility and accountability between the ‘centre’ and Departments.

123. Other positive developments include the improvement in IT infrastructure and services which, for example, has made it possible to simplify business processes now fielded throughout Departments.

124. All this amounts to putting in place a modern financial management system. Some problems remain, however—

- first, the ability of Departments to operate the system is still variable (for example, in the accuracy of budgetary forecasting and monitoring of spend);
- secondly, the system is still more cumbersome and costly than it should be: more staff have been needed to key in data, which suggests that responsibilities may not have been delegated far enough down the line in Departments or that there is excessive counter-signing and authorisation;
- thirdly, a more general concern about the management of capital expenditure, project work and contracts. We have made detailed recommendations designed to strengthen project and programme management in respect of Works and Estates, where the level
of spend is highest. But attention also needs to be paid to other aspects of purchasing and contracting, both in the initial stage of business cases and investment appraisals and in the subsequent phase of monitoring contractor performance once the arrangements are in place (for example, the House cleaning contract).

125. These areas should improve as action in hand takes effect and experience grows in operating the system.

126. The main challenge now is to use the financial information being generated from the HAIS process to inform management decisions on services and delivery. Although the financial systems are in place, and all Departments are compiling management information in one form or another, it is not yet sufficiently consistent or capable of being aggregated to support strategic and corporate management — i.e. to assist the Management Board to improve performance, meet measurable objectives and undertake prioritisation.

127. This slow progress is attributable in part to the distraction caused by the need to implement resource accounting and budgeting, as part of a Government-wide process to provide a more robust understanding of the cost of running the public sector. The number of professionally qualified finance staff is another limiting factor.

128. The fact remains, however, that the House Service is only now, as a result of the HAIS programme, in a position to begin building the information base for the performance management system which Braithwaite recommended and which we also regard as a necessary and integral element to enabling the Commons to plan and run its services more efficiently. The task is to draw up the activity and functional costing system to be used for measuring performance; to populate it with the necessary data, collected on a consistent basis across all House Departments; and to gather comparable information from other organisations in order to benchmark performance and identify areas for improvement.

129. The costing system to be introduced should take into account the full cost of the activity or function involved, including allocation of overhead or fixed costs — for example, ‘rent’ and utilities — as well as staff and direct running costs. This may need to be achieved by broad centrally derived attribution and apportionment. The important principle is that the full cost of services or activities should always be exposed, both for its own sake and for valid comparisons to be made with other organisations.

130. It is encouraging that work is now in hand to find partners with whom benchmarking can take place. Suitable comparisons could be made with other Parliaments (discussions are under way with the Scottish Parliament, the National Assembly for Wales and the Northern Ireland Assembly) or different organisations engaged in similar activity — for example, hotels and restaurants for benchmarking with the Refreshment Department.

131. The results of this work will be of value at both business and corporate levels: the former to enable Departments to assess the economy, efficiency and effectiveness of their services, and provide measures for productivity gains; the latter, enabling the Management Board and Commission to make judgements about strategic priorities and to inform decisions on the level, quality and method by which services should be delivered, including possible outsourcing, relocation and multiple use of facilities.
132. We have recommended that the Office of the Chief Executive should have overall responsibility for the performance management system; but finance staff, both centrally and in Departments, will have a major role to play.

133. For the reasons discussed above, i.e.—

- the time it has taken to put basic financial information systems in place under the existing federal structure,

- the need to continue to work at budgetary monitoring and control, and the management of capital projects and contracts, and

- the importance of underpinning a performance management system with information capable of being aggregated for corporate purposes—

we believe that there should be stronger control by the centre over finance policies and processes, together with their observance and implementation by the House Departments. While Departmental finance staff must be ‘bedded out’ in the business units they support, the Director of Finance and Administration needs to be in a position to ensure that financial policies are implemented effectively, common standards and procedures observed and management information produced on a consistent basis. This should occur ideally through a collegiate process of dialogue, but it also requires having sufficient capacity at the centre and the ability to exert appropriate authority. To that end, we recommend that—

- the Department of Finance and Administration should be strengthened, including by the addition of a management accountant, either by redeployment of staff currently in Departments or by additional external recruitment;

- existing financial delegations should be amended to give the Director of Finance and Administration and his senior staff greater control over finance staff in Departments, in terms of performance, professional development and deployment;

- finance staff in Departments should have a reporting line to the Department of Finance and Administration, as second reporting or countersigning officers for the reports of Departmental finance staff.

Financial Resources

134. Subject to the decisions of the House, the Board of Management aims to manage core services over the period to 2011 at a level of expenditure no higher than the ceiling previously agreed for 2006/07, adjusted for inflation. However, there are a number of upward pressures, including from security, high value works projects, whether for maintenance of the estate or for initiatives linked to visitors and connecting Parliament with the public, and rising demands for more services to Members. The expectation is that additional resources could well be required beyond the £233.1 million in the current year for the Administration budget and £163.2 million for Members’ salaries, costs and allowances (the 2006/07 cash figures are £173.3 million and £162.4 million respectively).

135. To meet this the Board of Management plans to keep existing services under review to identify efficiency savings that could be re-cycled to finance planned investment.
136. However, the House has not been subjected to the same disciplines as Whitehall Departments, which are currently delivering 3% net cash savings per year, including 5% annual reductions in running costs (albeit after some had received greater increases than did the House previously).

137. Now that improved financial planning and management systems are in place, it should be possible for the House Service to go further in more active budgetary management. Departments could be asked to re-present their plans, built up from a zero-based costing exercise, along the lines of those conducted by Government Departments in recent years. It is, of course, for the House to decide on the overall level of expenditure and, for example, whether to impose formal efficiency challenges. However, even if the budget remains at the present planned level there would be merit in establishing, within the existing envelope, whether resources should be moved from lower to higher areas of priority. One possibility would be to invite budget holders to present their proposals to 2011 on the basis of three separate assumptions: -5%, 0%, +5% in real terms with indications of the losses incurred or benefits to be gained. This would then provide the Management Board, Finance and Services Committee and Commission with a more informed basis on which to make strategic judgements and choices about services and facilities.

138. We recommend that the Management Board should conduct a budgetary exercise, led by the Director of Finance and Administration, under which each department would be required to present its plans to the Finance and Services Committee on the basis of alternative funding assumptions, to inform decisions on future financial allocations.

**Audit**

139. During the course of our work, an in-House review has been undertaken of the House’s Internal Review Service (IRS). We did not therefore examine the operations of the IRS in detail. However, we formed the impression that the present partnership with PricewaterhouseCoopers has been successful in raising the quality of audit work generally. We make no formal recommendation, in the expectation that this, or a similar such partnering arrangement, will continue in future.

**Procurement**

140. The House is engaged in wide-ranging purchasing and contractual activity to the value of more than £100 million per year. To do this more efficiently and enable the individual House Departments to achieve economies of scale and use the House’s corporate purchasing power more effectively in the market, a small Central Procurement Office (CPO) was established in 2002. The need for this was illustrated, for example, by the existence of fourteen contracts for photocopier machines, placed by six departments separately, from three different suppliers.

141. Since 2004, progress has been made in setting smarter contracts and delivering savings. The most notable example is a new approach to printing services and a long term contract with The Stationery Office which, together, are estimated to deliver savings of more than £12 million over ten years.
142. In 2006, the House commissioned a separate review of procurement strategy from an expert consultancy in this field, which had led to recommendations designed to introduce category management, improved tools and methodologies, create a skilled procurement team and introduce high level sponsorship of procurement activity across the House. In view of this separate report, we have not concentrated on this area ourselves.

143. However, two issues have arisen in the course of our work—

- whether responsibility for driving forward improved procurement practices should be left to the individual Departments or be guided by a central office;
- whether the emphasis should be on initial purchasing costs or through life management of contracts to realise maximum benefit.

144. As regards a central unit, we see the existing team — five in all — as having a valuable function, especially as it is now in a position to move beyond ensuring compliance, to advising on value for money. However, the nature of purchasing across the House involves very different activities and markets, ranging from construction services to catering supplies. We see the value of the central team as being essentially that of putting the necessary frameworks in place and advising the Departmental specialists on generic issues, rather than taking over the purchasing itself. Indeed, as expertise increases (and it is already at a high level in, for example, the Refreshment Department) the need for a central office should decrease, although strong financial controls will, of course, need to remain in place in the House.

145. As regards the focus of where further work should lie, we would see the emphasis needing to shift from initial purchase arrangements (once better co-ordination has been achieved across the House) to improved performance in managing the contracts that are put in place, for example, seeking gain-sharing with contractors, and enforcing penalties for failure to meet agreed service-level standards. The cleaning contract is a case in point.

146. **We recommend that the emphasis of the effort to improve the House's procurement activity as a whole should be on building the expertise of contracts managers in Departments to ensure through life value for money is achieved, and accountability for delivering it pinned down, rather than focus predominantly on initial purchase costs.**

**Human Resources**

147. Human resources, as with finance and procurement services, are managed in accordance with the federal structure of the House Service and the ‘delegated model’. There is a ‘centre’ in the Department of Finance and Administration for policy and professional guidance and support. But most of the work is done within the six House Departments and PICT, all with their own HR (and finance) sections, under their own Departmental Establishment (and Finance) Officers. The teams vary in size in each functional area, but now cover training, learning and development, as well as transfers between Departments and monitoring of staff budgets. Co-ordination between Departments is achieved by second and third tier co-ordinating groups.
148. There are undoubted benefits in this devolved Departmental structure. As with finance and purchasing staff, HR staff are ‘close to’ the business; they know it and are therefore highly responsive to local needs and conditions. They are in a position to support line managers from a fully informed perspective. HR in the Clerk’s Department, for example, is quite unlike that in the Serjeant at Arms Department, given the different specialisms and functions. A staff survey and Investors in People re-accreditation in 2006 showed a high level of satisfaction among the House Service.

149. Against this, however, there are a number of weaknesses which we have noted during our review—

- inconsistency of practice between Departments, with differing locally grown terms and conditions, which are at odds with the principle of the House as a single employer;

- varying degrees of professional ability (not all Departments are large enough to have professionally qualified HR staff) and the consequent absence of a critical mass of HR expertise;

- the difficulty of managing staff careers beyond Departmental boundaries which leads to under-exploitation of the talent available to the House as a whole and a tendency to remain too long in individual posts for lack of further opportunity;

- cost considerations: it is estimated that the ratio of HR officers to staff across the House is around 1:30, whereas the target in most organisations is closer to 1:90. IT is making it possible (in the Commons as elsewhere) for staff to manage their own careers to a greater extent than before and line managers are expected to take on more responsibility for their teams.

150. We are reluctant to recommend changes in this area, because the delegated model which defines the responsibilities and limits of authority for central and local functions has only recently been put in place.

151. Nevertheless our review suggests that there is a strong case for looking at this again. The objective would be to push more HR functions down to line managers and to staff (under self-service arrangements) and to push more functions upwards to a stronger central HR division, reducing the role and amount of work done in Departments and centralising administrative support. In addition to consideration of cost, we see a number of advantages in such an approach.

152. First, producing greater managerial competences across the House of Commons. While the existing system is excellent in developing specialisms, such as in the Clerk’s Department (where an internal policy of managed moves applies), the separate Departmental silos makes it much harder to develop the management and corporate skills needed to run services and the organisation as a whole. The Commons has tended to rely on ‘bringing in’ senior staff for management functions. But this is not a reliable method, not least because of the low turnover of staff — only 8% as against 18% for central Government Departments and much higher than that for the private sector — which restricts the ability to recruit staff at middle management level.
153. Hence the need to place the emphasis on ‘bringing on’ existing staff. This calls for the introduction of staff circulation practices which routinely cross Departmental boundaries and provide for greater reciprocal secondments to other parts of the civil service and the private sector. Some inter-departmental moves of staff do take place, under the level transfer scheme introduced in 2004 and other arrangements. The numbers of such moves are monitored by the Board of Management as part of the quarterly performance information it receives. Projects are about to start for outward secondments to industry and Government Departments. But as long as the existing devolved policies and Departmental HR issues remain dominant, with a relatively weak corporate ability to move staff between areas, this seems unlikely to be sufficient to satisfy the requirement, in terms of either staff aspirations or the needs of the organisation as a whole.

154. Secondly, the importance of HR policy in providing the corporate ‘glue’ of shared goals and values so that staff work more effectively towards achieving common ends. This requires a number of HR interventions in addition to staff circulation policies: shared ‘core’ skill sets (as distinct from specialisms), common standards of management, communication and staff development; recruitment to agreed standards; and common management ‘ethics’ at senior levels. Much has already been done, driven by the present Director of Finance and Administration — for example, the Senior Management Development Programme. However, the means by which such initiatives are developed at present, via cross-cutting groups, remains slow and cumbersome and the results are modest so far.

155. Thirdly, the need for greater flexibility across Departmental boundaries to cope with the pressures of change in House priorities and objectives. For example, the development of the select committee system in the Commons calls for greater interchange between the Clerk’s Department and the Library, given the need for more teams with a strong research capacity. The agenda for connecting Parliament with the public raises similar boundary areas between the IT Department, Serjeant at Arms Department and the Library. The achievement of joined-up, Member-facing services, especially in terms of how complaints or enquiries are dealt with (the ‘one stop shop’ concept), would be facilitated by greater interchange among the service support Departments. These, and the increased importance of managerial skills throughout the House Service, generally push in the same direction: towards a more integrated career structure for Clerks, Librarians and other staff at senior level; and a strengthening of the position of the central HR division to implement talent development House-wide.

156. We therefore recommend—

- the delegated model in respect of HR functions should be reconsidered, with a view to strengthening strategic and corporate HR functions and removing duplication and diseconomies in the present system;

- a scheme should be introduced to identify and develop internal talent on a House-wide basis, administered by central HR. Each Department would identify a proportion of its posts for developmental purposes, and staff on the scheme would move through planned postings, and secondments, until they reached senior levels (or failed to make the grade).
157. **We also recommend that the Management Board should include a professionally qualified Director of Human Resources.** The Director of Human Resources would chair the inter-departmental Human Resources Group. Whether the HR function should be hived off from the Department of Finance and Administration and established as a separate Department is less clear. On the one hand, to do so would emphasise the importance of the HR function. Against this, there is a risk, while the present federal culture persists, that a separate Department would tend to become an end in itself rather than a facilitator of House-wide outputs. Moreover, much of the momentum that the corporate agenda has gained so far is the result of the efforts of the Director of Finance and Administration and it would be important to ensure that this would not be affected by a separation of the HR function from other parts of the Administration. We do not therefore make a firm recommendation on this matter.
4 Estates and Works

158. On 12 March 2007 we submitted to the House of Commons Commission our emerging findings in one area. This concerned Estates and Works. It was desirable to consider this area ahead of the main body of the report of our review for a number of reasons—

- first, in the virtually unanimous opinion of those interviewed, the organisation put in place following the Braithwaite report had not proved satisfactory, and significant problems remained in the planning, management and control of the Parliamentary works programme;

- secondly, it is an area of high importance: whether measured in terms of value for money, given the size of the Estates and Works budget (£63 million covering both Houses); the operational significance of ensuring that Parliament can function as a working building and Members and Peers receive the accommodation services they need; or the longer term need to maintain and conserve the Parliamentary Estate, based on the Palace of Westminster;

- thirdly, the House Service had already recognised the need for improvements to be made and had appointed a separate external adviser to assist in the design, management and implementation of plans to deliver an improved Estate strategy. The specialist’s remit also covered the consideration of the associated governance, project management and financial processes to achieve faster and better results at optimum value for money.

Context

159. The Serjeant at Arms Department is the largest in the House of Commons with some 390 staff divided between three directorates: Estates, Works Services and Operations, and the Serjeant’s Finance Unit (SFU). The Serjeant at Arms is responsible for accommodation, works, access and security and has an annual budget of some £94 million, which accounts for 39% of the total House of Commons Administrative budget.

160. Estates and Works became the responsibility of the Serjeant at Arms (and Black Rod in the House of Lords) in 1991 following the recommendations of the Ibbs report which also led to the establishment of the Parliamentary Works Directorate (PWD). The Parliamentary Estate centres around Barry and Pugin’s 1840s Palace of Westminster, a UNESCO World Heritage site which must be maintained sensitively. The estate is also a working place of the highest importance and must provide upgraded modern services capable of meeting the needs of Members and their staff. Access to the public is a further major consideration. And there is the need to meet high standards of energy efficiency and environmental targets.

Braithwaite 2 Report and Findings

161. The Braithwaite 2 Review of the governance, control and systems of the Serjeant at Arms Department in 2000 found that PWD generally provided high quality service. There
were concerns about a lack of transparency in the way it operated: inadequate controls and governance arrangements; poor management information processes and systems to demonstrate value for money; and little evidence that work was going forward within a coherent and agreed long term plan which reflected the House’s business needs. Braithwaite focused in particular on the role of the Director of Works, who was perceived as operating with a wide degree of autonomy and acting as both the ‘informed client’ or ‘customer’ for works services and the ‘provider’ of those services.

162. The most important aspects of Braithwaite’s corrective recommendations were as follows—

- a strengthened and clearer role for the Serjeant at Arms and by implication for Black Rod in respect of the House of Lords as budget holders for the works programme, with those delivering it being accountable to them, on the basis of agreed performance targets for defined works categories within clear delegations;

- separation of the ‘client’ and ‘provider’ functions (in accordance with established models of good practice); with PWD split into two: a Parliamentary Estates Directorate acting as the ‘informed client’; and a Parliamentary Works Services Directorate, acting as the ‘provider’ (containing the necessary project and maintenance managers, furniture services and directly employed labour; and liaising with external consultants and contractors);

- creation of a Departmental finance office, to strengthen financial planning, budgeting and controls, within a context of accounting policy and standards set by the House of Commons Department of Finance and Administration.

163. The separation of ‘client’ and ‘provider’ functions was also seen as a step on the way to the possibility of greater ‘outsourcing’ in the delivery of Parliamentary works services, with fuller use of the skills available in the private sector.

Implementation of Braithwaite 2

164. The Braithwaite 2 recommendations have been implemented and are working satisfactorily in some respects. Central finance (and HR) units have been established and have delivered many of the improvements sought: concentrating effort efficiently; improving the flow of financial and management information; and promoting best practice, including in procurement.

165. But in the key area of the new Estates and Works Services structures, implementation proved more problematic. The roles of the Serjeant at Arms and Black Rod as budget holders were strengthened in terms of formal responsibilities, but ability to discharge those authorities was not provided for. There also appears to have been a crucial disagreement over detailed allocation of roles and responsibilities as between Estates and Works. The Estates (informed client) branch ended up in effective control of the budget, but was allocated only fifteen posts to discharge this (four of them curatorial, the remainder to cover the roles of project sponsorship, Estates policy and maintaining the forward programme). Against this, there were around 150 posts in Works Services. There were two project sponsors in Estates to supervise the work of more than twenty project managers in
Works Services. The programme planning expertise – a vital element in Estates policy and management – was left largely in the hands of Works Services.

**Current Problems and Deficiencies**

166. This background is relevant in terms of the problems identified in the course of this review seven years on. It is arguable that the client/provider split, appropriate in large organisations, was a less suitable model for Parliamentary works, where the development of a critical mass of programme management expertise and single-point authority in governance were of a higher priority. But in any case the way in which the division was implemented was a recipe for duplication, bottlenecks and lack of clarity as to who was responsible for what. This might have worked had there been full collegiate co-operation among all concerned; but in the formative stages of the new organisation at least, the necessary teamwork was lacking. None of this is to criticise the individuals working in the organisations: Estates and Works Services have hard working and dedicated staff, who have delivered and continue to deliver a range of successful programmes. They themselves are among those who have recognised that the existing structure is not achieving the benefits required.

167. The shortcomings identified in this review are validated by the more detailed work being carried out by the external adviser and the external members of the Estate Board. They range from planning and strategy to detailed governance and financial control and may be summarised as follows—

- delays in the delivery of the works programme – for example, the growing backlog in maintenance of the Estate, including the roof of the Palace and the Basement Mechanical and Electrical project, and the Visitor Reception Building;

- inadequate preparation of business cases and investment appraisals, requiring intervention by the Finance Directors on behalf of the Accounting Officers in both Houses, which has compounded the delays in putting the works programme into effect (the Director of Finance and Administration in the House of Commons has, for example, found it necessary to appoint an external consultant to assist his scrutiny, when the improvements required ought to be effected within SAA);

- related difficulties in demonstrating value for money;

- confused lines of authority, with business cases occasionally presented to the Clerk of the House without the involvement of the Serjeant at Arms, notwithstanding his formal budgetary and management responsibility;

- work going forward without proper authority and approval, omissions which raise issues of governance and control;

- delays in the development of a strategic approach, with a 25-year Estate strategy only now beginning to move into place, without yet a clear linkage between this and the immediate works activity or a planned forward programme; there are similar delays in the production of a condition survey of the Estate on which to base such plans, or a full asset register;
related to the above, the lack of a planned forward programme which takes account of the business needs of the House in terms of accommodation requirements, the Parliamentary calendar (which dictates the periods in which major works can be done) and other influencing factors such as security needs;

- lack of precision in the House of Commons Resource Framework – a document prepared in 2005 – and the need to pin down more clearly delegated levels and categories of work to which they apply;

- the need for simplification and precision in reporting mechanisms for the progress of the works programme and major projects — to facilitate monitoring by the budget holder and supervisory Boards;

- the absence of post-project evaluation and review to provide lessons learned and assist in raising the standard of project management and performance.

168. A report of this kind inevitably dwells on the weaker areas of performance. There are many strengths, not least in the staff’s commitment to Parliament. Particular areas run well, notably delivery of minor works and day-to-day maintenance — an area, incidentally, where financial authority and operational responsibility are clearly aligned. In implementing the necessary improvements, it will be important to recognise that the existing system, despite its defects, is not broken. Care must be taken to avoid disruption to the 2007/08 programme of works, while putting in place the changes that are needed for the future.

Recommendations

169. Our recommendations, previously presented to the House of Commons Commission as emerging findings, are as follows—

i. We recommend that the Estates and Works Services Directorates should be re-integrated under one Director who would provide overall leadership and ensure coherence, consistency, team working, professionalism and delivery.

ii. The post will be a demanding one, and should be filled by competition, open to outside candidates as well as those with internal knowledge and experience, using flexibility at the top of the payscale, if necessary, to attract outside candidates of the right calibre.

iii. Key to the new organisation will be a Programme Office, able to pull together the forward plan on the basis of condition surveys and accommodation strategies agreed by both Houses, and to ensure that projects go forward on a properly organised and synchronised basis, with appropriate appraisal and monitoring systems in place. We therefore recommend that a Programme Office should be set up, the functions of which should be worked up in the light of the external adviser’s recommendations.

iv. The re-integrated Directorate should continue to come under the Serjeant at Arms, reporting jointly to the Serjeant at Arms and Black Rod under the existing arrangements (rather than becoming a new joint Department, such as PICT, or a
separate Commons-based Department). The basic reason for this is to ensure that property management continues to serve the business needs of Parliament as part of the wider delivery of services for which the Serjeant at Arms and Black Rod are responsible.

v. The overall budget should be vested in the Serjeant at Arms as it affects Commons interests (and, by implication, Black Rod in the Lords). Detailed delegations to the new Director and his staff need to be worked out. **We recommend that ownership of the Estates/Works budget and ownership of the Estate strategy should be pinned down clearly so that financial authority and operational responsibilities are fully aligned.**

vi. **We recommend that the Serjeant’s Finance Unit (SFU) should remain outside the new combined Directorate, as a separate organisation reporting to the Serjeant at Arms: facilitating the works programme in general; assisting the Serjeant at Arms in financial control and governance; and providing the necessary transparency and separation of duties.**

vii. **We recommend that, linked to (vi) above, the SFU should be strengthened beyond its existing advisory function.** While the new Director of Estates and Works should be responsible for budgetary planning of the programme and for in-year management, the SFU should have a new executive responsibility for the construction of better quality business cases and general compliance. This should remove from the Finance Director(s) the need to conduct detailed scrutiny of business cases, a practice which causes delays at present and blurs responsibility at Board level for the operational implementation of the works programme. The purpose would be to ensure that —

- no business case should go from the Estate and Works area to the Serjeant at Arms, Clerk of the House/Chief Executive or Management Board without prior certification by the SFU; and
- financial authorisation for the Estates and Works area to commit expenditure, following approval of business cases, is given by the SFU.

viii. **We recommend that levels of delegation for works expenditure should be reviewed and harmonised as between the House of Commons and House of Lords to facilitate synchronisation of decision-making on joint projects.**

ix. **We recommend that the House’s Resource Framework guidance should be revised in respect of project approval processes, with clarification of what constitutes ‘works’, ‘leases’, ‘consultancy’, etc.**

x. In order to improve performance and develop a better ability to contract from the private sector, **we recommend that training of project managers should be given high priority; greater reliance on bringing in project managers from the private sector may be required.**

xi. In principle, Parliament should consider more strategic partnership arrangements with the private sector to deliver elements of a longer term programme whereby
more risk is transferred to the private sector; for this to occur, however, the Estate strategy itself needs to become more mature and staff to become more skilled in the intelligent client and sponsorship role.

170. The recommendations, expanded by those of the external adviser, will require a major effort in implementation, particularly against the background of the experience with the Braithwaite recommendations. For these reasons, it is further recommended that the Estate Board should take on an executive role on a temporary basis for the implementation phase, in addition to its existing advisory responsibility. The presence of external advisers on the Estate Board should provide helpful experience on which to draw. The terms of reference for the Estate Board should be reviewed accordingly.
Connecting Parliament with the Public

171. Our terms of reference asked us to pay particular attention to this topic and we have therefore considered it in some detail. The starting point is the report of the Select Committee on Modernisation of the House of Commons on Connecting Parliament with the Public. It was prepared under the Chairmanship of Rt Hon Peter Hain MP, the then Leader of the House and a member of the Commission. It was published in June 2004.

Modernisation Committee

172. The Committee’s report aimed “to make recommendations which will better reconcile the necessary purpose of Parliament with the reasonable expectation of the people to have access to the processes by which we govern ourselves”. To that end the Committee made a number of suggestions for the Commons to make itself more accessible to those outside, both as interested visitors and as citizens wishing to be more involved in proceedings, to make it easier for people to understand the work of Parliament, and to communicate its activity to the world outside.

173. In its November 2004 response, the Commission agreed to most of the Modernisation Committee’s recommendations, including publication on the internet of the Hansard report of proceedings throughout the day, as and when the final version was sent to the printer; the production of a newsletter (initially Commons Knowledge, now This Week’s Business); and making available to visitors a leaflet on the work of public bill and other general committees.

174. The Commission did not consider it feasible in the current security climate to contemplate tours passing through the Public Gallery in the Chamber. The Commission suggested that the House should be asked to express its views on the proposal for a central press office, a new voter’s guide and the proposal for an educational roadshow.

175. In the debate on 26 January 2005, the Modernisation Committee’s report was overwhelmingly approved (by 375 votes to 14). The Resolution agreed that the House should make itself more accessible, should make it easier for people to understand the work of Parliament and should do more to communicate its activity to the general public; and would welcome more proactive promotion to the media and the public of the House and its work. In addition, the Resolution picked out three specific areas for action: the website, outreach and the new voter’s guide.

Parliamentary Website

176. The presentation of the www.parliament.uk website has been developed in accordance with the Modernisation Committee’s proposals, as endorsed by the House, on the basis of a business case agreed by the Boards in both Houses in February 2006. This has required significant investment in systems and staff, working towards a fundamental re-engineering of the Parliamentary internet service. Webcasting on the www.parliamentlive.tv site has attracted substantial numbers of on-line viewers.
Parliamentary Roadshow and Outreach

177. While the concept of a roadshow has not gathered much support, a business case for outreach is currently in development. Plans are being considered for a network of regional centres with Westminster as the hub, drawing upon local infrastructure and using local Members as an asset. The Administration Committee has recommended that the Group on Information for the Public should develop concrete costed proposals for a pilot scheme of regional outreach officers for consideration by the relevant committees before the end of July 2007.

New Voter’s Guide

178. A recent audit of political engagement found that less than a quarter of those aged 18 to 24 would be absolutely certain to vote at a general election, compared to 69% of those aged 55 and over. Young people have naturally been the focus of efforts to make politics in general, and Parliament in particular, more accessible. From June 2006, some 265,000 personalised versions of a new voter’s guide, the Voting Times, have been sent out to young people on or around their eighteenth birthday. Findings from the first round of user research have been positive.

Other Modernisation Committee Proposals

179. There were several other recommendations in the Modernisation Committee’s report, of varying importance and complexity, ranging from giving school parties priority over Macmillan Room bookings in September to altering the citizenship curriculum in all English schools. Some, such as improved signage, have been implemented readily. Others, such as the use of on-line consultation by select committees, the layout of amendment papers in public bill committees or the handling of public petitions, touch more nearly on Parliamentary process itself and have been the subject of further study by the Procedure Committee.

Visitor Reception Building (VRB) and Parliamentary Visitor Information Centre (PVIC)

180. In 2003 a new Central Tours Office was set up to manage groups of visitors invited to Parliament by Members and Peers and to train guides to a standard script. The office also took over the operation of the annual Summer Opening following confirmation that this would become a permanent feature on the Parliamentary calendar following the success of two experimental seasons. Since 2005 this office has also recruited a team of Visitor Assistants (VAs) to provide an improved welcome to visitors, prioritise access, manage queues to the public galleries, give information about Parliamentary business, assist with tours, operate the Summer Opening, and help to deliver the schools’ visits programme of the Parliamentary Education Service. The team has increased to seventeen to support these functions and the opening of the new Visitor Reception Building (VRB). The Central Tours Office and the Visitor Assistant Team are now two mutually supportive operations sitting within a combined Visitor Services section.

181. In a debate in May 2004, the House approved the proposal for a new security and reception building at the north end of Cromwell Green, now known as the Visitor
Reception Building, which opens in 2007. One of the expected benefits will be that visitors’ first contact with staff of the House will be with VA staff whose primary concern is to greet them and make them feel welcome to an institution which, paradoxically, has not always conveyed that impression to visitors in the past.

182. In June 2004, the Modernisation Committee’s report welcomed the VRB concept and decided to go much further. It endorsed a proposal to explore ‘all possible options’ for establishing a dedicated Visitor Centre near the Palace of Westminster, with as its starting point four main objectives—

a) a welcome to visitors;

b) an interesting and friendly environment;

c) making Parliament more accessible, allowing visitors to see at least something of what Parliament is and does without necessarily having to visit the galleries, committees or take a tour; and

d) improving public understanding and knowledge of the work and role of Parliament.

183. There can be a tension between marketing the historic Palace of Westminster as a world heritage site of first-class importance, during the Summer Opening for example, and reaching out to the general public who appear to be losing interest in voting at elections. The Modernisation Committee itself argued that “to the extent that there is conflict between the needs of different groups of visitors, we believe that the House should, as a matter of principle, give priority to the needs of those who come to see and participate in the work of Parliament over those whose primary interest is the Palace of Westminster as a historical building”.

184. In its April 2007 report on Improving Facilities for Educational Visitors to Parliament, the (post-2005) Administration Committee came to a different view from its predecessors. On examining the cost of options for a new-build Parliamentary Visitor and Information Centre (PVIC), close to the Palace of Westminster, the Committee decided to reject the options submitted (up to more than £80 million for the ‘ideal’ PVIC) and to re-examine how facilities should be prioritised within the existing accommodation strategy.

185. The Administration Committee placed the emphasis firmly on young people, and recommended that the Finance and Services Committee and the Commission, with the appropriate bodies in the House of Lords, should consider the case for subsidising school visits, linked to learning requirements, to Westminster from more remote constituencies.

186. The Administration Committee recommended that a dedicated space (of around 1,000 m²) for educational visitors, on or off the existing estate, should be developed as a resource for Members to interact with students from their constituencies through programmes run by the Education Service and to provide support to Members’ staff organising tours for schools. The Administration Committee invited the House to endorse its recommendations in order to set in train more detailed design work and planning discussions for a precise and costed proposal to be brought back to the Administration Committee and to the Commission in due course, in consultation with the House of Lords.
187. The PVIC saga has some way to go. It illustrates the difficulty for the House Service in conducting long-term planning on issues subject to political sensitivity. It would be premature to draw lessons from it as to governance. The current approach of the Administration Committee has been informed by a great deal of work done by the PVIC Programme Board and by the consultants brought in to do the feasibility study. It is significant that cost to the taxpayer was one of the reasons for the Committee altering course; although the cost of subsidising every British child to have at least one trip to London in their school career, and the impact of the sheer numbers of such visits, will need to examined carefully. Some Members have expressed the view that a Visitor Centre has less appeal for those with far-flung constituencies. Nevertheless, the Palace of Westminster, Big Ben, etc. has such iconic attraction that we regard encouraging and facilitating visitors to Parliament as remaining of the highest importance, not least because visitors arriving, perhaps, as tourists should leave better informed about the role of Parliament and their own potential as voters. The House is expected to debate the Administration Committee report shortly.

188. **We recommend that the House should endorse the Administration Committee’s proposals for a dedicated space for learning.**

**Central Press Office**

189. The Modernisation Committee made specific recommendations for the establishment of a central press office for the House of Commons, to take a more proactive role in promoting the House and its work, and for the Board of Management and the House of Commons Commission to consider urgently whether there is scope for further improving the co-ordination of the House’s media, educational and communications resources and planning, with effective Member oversight and close liaison with appropriate officials and Members of the House of Lords. The thrust of these recommendations is reflected in the terms of reference for our present review.

190. While select committee media officers are widely regarded as having been a success in raising the profile of select committee reports, the case for a central unit promoting the work of the House itself is more problematic. The Press accommodation in the Palace provides some 170 dedicated desk spaces for around 390 pass-holding journalists, as well as a bar and a cafeteria, in addition to the seats in the Press Gallery in the Chamber itself. This professional and elite press corps may not deliver as much media coverage as might be wished, but it is unrealistic to blame that shortfall on the lack of a central media office. When what happens in the Chamber is newsworthy, it still makes the news. The Modernisation Committee’s current inquiries into the use of non-legislative time in the Chamber and the role of the backbencher may bring more fruitful solutions: for example, new ways of making what happens in the Chamber more topical.

191. Moreover, as the recent French presidential elections showed, people will still turn out to vote in very high numbers when they are motivated by the issues to do so.

192. The present responsibility for co-ordinating relations with the media lies with the Office of the Clerk and our recommendations for strengthening this Office, together with the greater authority for the Librarian as the new Director of Information and
Communications should provide for improved co-ordination in this area without the need for new machinery.

**Internet and Interactive Website**

193. In any case, it may be rather backward-looking to pay too much attention to twentieth-century mass-media outlets in the modern era of electronic communication. The notion of a central grid controlling the news cycle looks increasingly dated in a world of multiple 24/7 TV channels, huge search engines, blogs and other user-generated content. The Modernisation Committee correctly identified the Parliamentary website as the key to connecting Parliament with the public, and crucially with the younger generation whose apparent lack of interest in turning out to vote at elections causes such concern. We would therefore regard the development of the most sophisticated and interactive website possible as being the most effective way of generating wider public interest in Parliamentary proceedings, for example in enabling inquirers to identify the issues which concern them, and in the stage of debate on legislation affecting them.

194. It is not for this review to recommend how far this process should go in using the website and the internet to enable the general public to have a more direct influence on Parliamentary business and decisions: whether, for example, to favour on-line consultation by select committees; or to encourage the general public to write to Members on the basis of subjects of mutual interest, without needing to be their constituents; or to allow public petitions expressed by such means to influence the legislative programme in some form.

195. However, we believe that the House Service, through development of the Parliamentary communications infrastructure and website, should be in a position to provide the services to facilitate these options should the House decide to proceed in that direction. This would include upgrading the website to be accessible according to news or subject (rather than process); providing for interactive or consultative use; and making it highly navigable. The costs of re-engineering have been estimated at between £6 million and £9 million, over five years, above the predicted cost of the present system. This seems likely to be a sound investment, compared to the cost of some other ‘outreach’ initiatives.

196. We recommend that the Parliamentary website and the internet generally should be regarded as a key element in fostering close connections between Parliament and the public, and crucially the younger generation, and should be developed and funded accordingly as a priority.

**Changing the Organisational Structures**

197. In its 2005 report *Members Only? Parliament in the Public Eye*, the Hansard Society’s Puttnam Commission made a strong case for brigading together all aspects of public engagement in a single ‘bi-cameral’ joint Department. We have tested these ideas thoroughly in our private discussions, our examination of internal documents and our observation of the Commons at close quarters over the past few months. We have looked at the fate of the Modernisation Committee’s own recommendations, and we have found no convincing evidence that progress would have been any faster, or cheaper, if a joint Department had been created. In the Hansard Society’s follow-up to the Puttnam report, *Parliament in the Public Eye 2006: Coming into Focus?*, Lord Puttnam noted that
Parliament had made some significant improvements to a number of aspects of its communication strategy and practice and he called for the media to respond to the challenge of playing their part in improving the communications of Parliament.

198. The cross-cutting Group on Information for the Public (GIP) already works successfully under the chairmanship of the Commons Librarian. In addition to publishing its minutes on the Parliamentary intranet, it produces an annual report and a business plan, with a short ‘rough guide’ version, which sets out its aims for the year ahead in its areas of activity: the website; young people, education and the new voter’s guide; broadcasting, webcasting and filming; media communications and publicity; outreach; Parliamentary visitor and education facilities; proactive welcome; exhibitions; and work with external partners.

199. On balance, we conclude that the present arrangements work well and that it would be an error to seek to create a new ‘bi-cameral’ joint Department for public engagement purposes at this stage. Given the lack of appetite we have noted for creating more joint Departments for technical support functions — at least until PICT has settled down — there is a risk that efforts to do so on a subject close to the interests of the political leadership of both Houses would become diverted into debates that would detract from the basic objective.

200. Better outcomes are more likely to result from a reinforcement of the current approach—

- clear strategic direction from the very top, with the House of Commons Commission mandating information for the public as one of the three primary objectives of the House of Commons Service;

- strong leadership from the Librarian/Director of Information and Communications, given greater authority by the Management Board (and the Lords Management Board) and a budget as senior responsible owner to deliver specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time-limited objectives;

- genuine co-operation, effective internal communication and sharing of best practice through the House-wide Group on Information for the Public, with the active participation of all Commons Departments and the House of Lords;

- development of the Parliamentary website, which is already bi-cameral.

201. All this amounts to ‘mainstreaming’ communicating with the public as a concern for each and every official in the House Service, as they also contribute to the two other primary objectives, enabling the House and its committees to conduct their business effectively and enabling Members and their staff to perform their Parliamentary duties effectively.

202. We recommend that the Group on Information for the Public should remain the official-led organisation responsible for developing policy and programmes in this area, but should be given a stronger executive role under the chairmanship of the Director of Information and Communications, mandated by the Management Boards of both Houses and allocated a budget for this purpose.
Communications Allowance

203. In November 2006, the House approved by 290 votes to 199 the principle of a separate Communications Allowance for Members to assist in the work of communicating with the public on Parliamentary business. A number of issues were debated together that day, including a very significant change to the legislative process with the switch to evidence-taking public bill committees, but much of the debate was taken up with discussion of the use of pre-paid envelopes by Members. The dividing line between acceptable Parliamentary activity, in responding to constituents’ concerns, and unacceptable party political campaigning, with unsolicited mailings to voters, has proved hard to police in practice. As Sir Hayden Phillips noted in his review of funding for political parties, reimbursement of the costs of Parliamentary newsletters and so on could tend to benefit incumbency.

204. The Members Estimate Committee (the Commission in its non-statutory capacity, dealing with Members’ pay and allowances) published a report in March 2007 setting out the purposes of the new £10,000 yearly allowance, to be combined with an annual cap of £7,000 on the value of pre-paid envelopes and stationery provided to a Member by the Serjeant at Arms Department. The House debated the Members Estimate Committee report on 28 March 2007. It was opposed by the Official Opposition, whose spokesman in the debate was the Shadow Leader of the House, herself a member of the Members Estimate Committee and the Commission. She described the Allowance as “a new taxpayer-funded allowance that risks becoming a spin budget for incumbent MPs”. The report was endorsed in a division (on mainly party lines) by 283 votes to 188. Detailed guidance issued by the Department of Finance and Administration in April 2007 sets out allowable expenditure under the Allowance, including regular reports to constituents, newsletters, questionnaires and surveys, petitions, targeted communications, contact cards, distribution costs, websites and some capital purchases (of publishing equipment).

205. The Communications Allowance might be a case study in the difficulties of Parliamentary governance; sometimes politics takes over. The challenge for the House Service now is to support Members in the operation of the new Allowance, with rules applied efficiently and fairly, relying on clear guidance that does its best to avoid the risk of Members finding themselves on the wrong end of a complaint to the Commissioner for Standards. Looking ahead, there may be opportunities for the House Service to support Members in sharing best practice and to pioneer innovative ways for Members to communicate with voters, using newsletters, surveys and on-line consultations that genuinely extend the engagement of Parliament with constituents.

206. We recommend that the House Service should actively support Members in making best use of the Communications Allowance, facilitating where possible savings in joint procurement of capital equipment and top-of-the-line software for publishing hard copy newsletters as well as the design of modern interactive websites.
6 Services to Members

207. Responsibility for developing and managing the core services which support the work of the House is delegated to the House Departments. Some services are provided on a cross-departmental basis and others are provided by one Department for Parliamentary users. Broadly, the services provided by Departments fall into two overlapping categories: the Clerk’s Department, Library and Official Report are mainly engaged with front line operations, enabling the House and its committees to conduct their business effectively; while the Serjeant at Arms Department, Department of Finance and Administration, Refreshment Department and PICT provide facilities and support, delivering services to enable Members and Members’ staff to perform their Parliamentary duties effectively. Promoting public knowledge and understanding of Parliament’s work and role is a third category performed across Departments.

208. We now look at each Department of the House Service in turn, focusing on their delivery of services to Members.

Clerk’s Department

209. The Clerk’s Department is responsible for providing advice and services to the House as a whole, the Speaker and Deputy Speakers, Committees appointed by the House and their Chairmen, individual Members (and the Government, Opposition and other parties collectively) and the public. The majority of its staff work in the Committee Office, which provides the secretariat for most select committees. The Table Office, Legislation Service and Journal Office are much smaller units which are focused mainly on the work of the Chamber and general committees. The Clerk’s Department also includes the Legal Services Office, headed by Speaker’s Counsel, the Vote Office, the Parliamentary Office of Science and Technology and the Overseas Office.

210. The Clerk’s Department remains an acknowledged centre of professional excellence in the House. On the basis of the recent survey, Members’ satisfaction with the service remains high across the range of activities, usually at above 80%. Over a third of Members responding were extremely satisfied with officials’ treatment of their amendments to Bills, Private Members’ Bills and other aspects of legislation. Members who served on select committees since the last general election were generally very or extremely satisfied with the support they received from Committee staff. Courtesy of staff was also rated highly.

211. This is not surprising. Clerks in both Houses remain an elite group, with the lion’s share of the House Service SCS grades, which are filled mainly by Clerks promoted from Band A who originally joined the Department through the civil service fast-stream competition. Over 50 per cent of the Department are women, including half of the current Band A grades and two-thirds of the fast-streamers recruited over the past ten years. Clerks in Band A and SCS grades benefit from careful career development programmes. We have three proposals for the Clerk’s Department, which arise from points made to us during the review.

212. First, the Clerk of the House combines the responsibility of being Chief Executive with being the principal adviser to the House and to the Speaker on parliamentary practice and
procedure, as well as being the head of profession for Clerks. In view of the importance of managing the House Service as a whole, there would be merit in finding ways of easing the burden of running the Clerk’s Department itself. This might be achieved by re-organising the senior structure of the Department. At present, the Clerk has an Advisory Group of four—

- the Clerk Assistant, who has primary responsibility for day-to-day business in the House (Band SCS 3);
- the Clerk of Committees, who sits on the Board of Management representing the Clerk’s Department; who is Departmental Establishments Officer; and who, in addition to heading the Committee Office, acts as Clerk of the Liaison Committee and Clerk of the Select Committee on Modernisation of the House of Commons (Band SCS 3);
- the Clerk of Legislation, who is also Departmental Finance Officer (Band SCS 3); and
- the Principal Clerk of the Table Office (Band SCS 2).

213. Provided substantial authority is delegated to each of the Deputies at Band SCS 3, it should be possible for the Clerk to concentrate more fully on the task of Chief Executive of the House Service and Chairman of the Management Board. If the collegiate structure of an Advisory Group is found to consume too much time and effort in discussion and coordination, it may be wiser for the Clerk of the House to consider appointing a single Deputy to sit on the Management Board on behalf of the Clerk’s Department as well as exercising authority over both human and financial resources of the Department.

214. Secondly, the review of select committee resources currently under way addresses the most significant growth area in the Clerk’s Department over the past three decades, in the work of select committees. Closer working with the Library Research Service has been a positive development, with Library researchers acting as inquiry managers on select committees and some select committee specialists, originally recruited on fixed-term appointments, moving on to permanent careers as experts in the Library. The Management Board will need to ensure that the staff resources available to the House as a whole are harnessed most effectively to the task of supporting Members in the front line operations of select committee work.

215. Thirdly, in only one area of the Clerk’s Department have we encountered less than unqualified satisfaction on the part of Members. This involves the Table Office — i.e. the process of accepting parliamentary questions, where some concerns were expressed to us about the variable responsiveness of the Office. In the Members’ survey, 85% of Members were extremely or very satisfied with the courtesy of Table Office staff, though only 67% of Members’ staff rated them as highly. We do not regard this as a serious complaint overall, as part of the difficulty arises from officials enforcing the wholesome principle that only Members may table questions, as distinct from their (unelected) assistants.

216. Nevertheless, this point, small in itself, does raise a wider issue of the role of the House Service as a whole in the way it supports Members. Traditionally, it has been a responsive service, reacting to demand and seeking to facilitate when asked, but being less proactive in anticipating Members’ requirements. This is understandable given the primary position of Members in calling the tune. But, especially with the pace of change, Members may not
always be aware of what is available to assist them. The Library is already doing more to present the facilities it can make available to Members in support of their work. The Clerk’s Department may also wish to consider this approach; it has already had considerable success with the Select Committee Media Officers, for example, in enhancing coverage of Members’ work in the select committee arena.

217. **We recommend that**—

- the Clerk of the House should delegate authority to one or more principal deputies to take on more of the task of running the Clerk’s Department;
- closer working between the Clerk’s Department and the Library in support of select committees should be developed further;
- the broader issue of a more proactive House service, to facilitate services to Members and consider the provision of new services, should be examined, in terms of both style and content. This may be a suitable issue for the Management Board.

**Library**

218. The Library has three primary objectives which relate directly to the services it provides for customers at Westminster and beyond—

- a well-informed House: providing a range of pre-prepared briefing materials and on-line services to inform both Parliamentary debate and those involved in it at Westminster and in their constituencies;
- well-informed Members: meeting the needs of Members and their staff by providing impartial, authoritative and fit-for-purpose responses to their requests for information and briefing in connection with their Parliamentary duties;
- a well-informed public: taking a leading role in the development and implementation of the House’s public information strategy.

219. The results of the 2007 survey of services showed that satisfaction levels with the services provided by the Library are high, with 75% extremely or very satisfied, or above, for each aspect of the service offered. The Library has needed to meet the challenge of changing requirements as traditional methods of finding and retrieving information involving reading rooms and book loans have been superseded by electronic methods of access and presentation. Many Members frequent the Library much less than in the past and use on-line resources.

220. The Library has generally done well to adjust. Additional PCs have been installed and Members who have offices remote from the Palace value the Library as a place in which they can work close to the Chamber. In addition, the Library is increasing the presence of specialist staff in the Members’ Library to improve the level of face to face service. Another notable initiative is the Library contact officer scheme and other promotional efforts directed at Members to ensure that they are aware of the services that the Library can offer them and their staff.
221. As a result the Library is facing many increasing demands for its services. Research enquiries are on an upward trend, usage of electronic briefing material is expanding rapidly and there are new requirements following the decision of the House last year to improve the briefing it receives on legislation. **We recommend that the Library should continue to shift resources from areas where demand is lessening to those where demand is growing, based on a developing cost-effectiveness programme.**

222. In these circumstances, it becomes increasingly desirable, on cost-effectiveness grounds, for the Library to pursue informal co-operation with the House of Lords Library wherever possible. **We recommend that the Library should review the prospects for more joint working with the House of Lords Library.**

**Official Report (Hansard)**

223. The Official Report produces edited verbatim reports of proceedings in the Chamber, Westminster Hall, general committees and some select committees. It is also responsible for the processing and printing of written answers and written ministerial statements and for the operation of the annunciator service. In addition to producing printed reports of Members’ speeches, the Department provides access to reports of proceedings in the Chamber and in Westminster Hall within three to four hours on the internet. Reports of proceedings in general committees are made available on the internet as soon as they have been produced, usually on the same sitting day. The task of reporting and editing is highly specialised and there is only a small pool of experts within the UK to service the various parliaments and legislative assemblies.

224. Satisfaction levels with the Official Report are extremely high — the highest across the House Service as a whole. It has been suggested by Members that there is room for improvement in one area: in making the text of speeches more readily available to Members for final checking, prior to publication in Hansard. We agree that this would serve the objective of responsiveness and of a more proactive approach to Member services. **We recommend that the Editor of the Official Report should review the means by which Members are given the opportunity to check the texts of their speeches prior to publication.**

**Serjeant at Arms Department**

225. The Department of the Serjeant at Arms regulates security and access and delivers a range of services, including accommodation, cleaning and mail services, as well as managing the Parliamentary Estate. It is organised in three directorates: Operations, Estates and Works Services, with finance and HR support functions. We have commented separately and in some detail in Chapter 4 on Estates and Works Services as well as on key aspects of the finance function. Here we comment on the Operations Directorate.

**Accommodation and facilities management**

226. Accommodation is a perennial source of concern in the House, given the physical limitations of the Parliamentary Estate, the increased pressure of the number of people to be housed on it (notwithstanding the expansions over the past fifteen years or so into Parliament Street and Portcullis House) and a sense among some Members that they no
longer have sufficient space and an appropriate environment in which to operate satisfactorily.

227. The allocation of accommodation, as between Members, their staff and officials of the House, is under discussion between the Serjeant at Arms Department and the Administration Committee and is the subject of a recent report which is under consideration.

228. In practice, more offices have been made available for Members than at any time before. Paradoxically, this positive development, together with the televising of Parliamentary proceedings, has had the unintended result of isolating Members from each other as they spend more time working in offices and less in communal areas. An important consideration, therefore, is the provision of sufficient space at Westminster other than in the Chamber itself where Members can interact.

229. This is made harder by the increased presence of other people who use the Parliamentary facilities. There is no easy remedy. The main factor in the growth in the number of those who use the Parliamentary facilities is Members’ staff. How to deal with that is ultimately a matter for Members. It is, however, important to approach the accommodation issue and use of facilities against that background.

230. In an attempt to find a solution in the past, the House has considered the possibility of providing financial incentives for Members to move staff off the Parliamentary Estate into constituencies and a corresponding disincentive to house all their staff at Westminster. In principle, this approach has its attractions, since the present incentives are slanted in favour of locating staff at Westminster where office services are provided cost-free. The Administration Committee has recommended that Members should not expect to be able to accommodate more than two staff comfortably at Westminster. Even this guideline may prove hard to implement in practice and, for that reason, we do not make a recommendation here on limiting staff numbers in this way. But in the absence of any serious prospect of relieving pressure on the estate, it becomes the more important for accommodation services to be provided to the highest possible standards and run professionally.

231. The Palace of Westminster remains a unique and historic institution, as well as a modern workplace. Detailed comparisons and benchmarking in matters of accommodation services would be fraught with difficulty. For example, Members who book a committee room for a private meeting can find the meeting moved to a less suitable room at short notice because of the overriding priority afforded to select committees. Nevertheless, such competing priorities for the use of limited space are not unique to Westminster. Lessons can be learned from those who provide hotel and conference facilities elsewhere, including in the private sector.

232. In this context, there is a strong case, in our view, for services such as accommodation, cleaning and office-keeping to be managed more sharply by a ‘customer-facing’ team. This would involve brigading together the cleaning services, office-keeping, accommodation and the Events Team (co-ordinating visits, exhibitions and room bookings) under a client relations group which would replace the existing separate small cells with a more integrated operation, attuned to Member needs and able to respond professionally.
233. It could be argued that a facilities manager could be brought in from the private sector to perform this function. However, this has tended to be the practice of the House Service in the past and it risks breeding a sense that professional management skills cannot or should not be developed from among the existing House Service. We see no reason why this should be so; indeed, in our view, there are many able House officials with insufficient career prospects under the existing Departmental structure, who, as we have argued elsewhere, should be developed through an internal management programme. Moreover, existing officials also understand the nature of the client base. And experts brought in from outside often themselves become quickly trapped without further career prospects within the Commons Service.

234. We recommend that a client relations group should be established within the Serjeant at Arms Department to provide a more responsive and integrated service to Members for accommodation and facilities, including a ‘one-stop shop’ service. It should be achieved by internal redeployment of staff and headed by a senior manager dedicated to this Member-facing role.

235. The head of the client relations group would underpin the role of the Serjeant at Arms as Facilities Director at Management Board level, which will be crucial in ensuring that a positive engagement with Members’ day-to-day requirements is drawn upon to inform corporate planning.

Tours and visitors

236. The Serjeant at Arms Department now has an increasingly important role to play in delivering the House-wide agenda for connecting the public with Parliament. The Central Tours Office and Visitor Assistants are managed as part of the Serjeant at Arms Department. In terms of the priority for the House’s objectives, this function should be seen primarily as helping to educate the public about the importance of the Parliamentary institution, rather than to facilitate tourism or manage access. For that reason, we have considered whether this function and unit should be moved from the Serjeant at Arms Department to the Library, from where the Central Tours guides and Visitor Assistants derive the Parliamentary education aspects of their material. Although the policy substance lies in this communications and information area, we are satisfied that the activity itself is more suitably aligned to those involved in managing the flow of people through the Palace, namely the police and doorkeepers. For that reason, we do not recommend bringing the visitor and tours staff under the Library. The good working relationships which exist are in our view sufficient to ensure that the necessary level of co-ordination takes place and the right communications messages are put across.

Security

237. Security is a priority area in the Commission’s Strategic Plan. There has in the past been concern about Parliament’s ability to manage security, particularly as threats have risen following 9/11.

238. There have, however, been positive developments since then: a higher profile for the Joint Committee on Security (covering both Houses and involving Members and officials together); security reviews, including one in 2004 by the Metropolitan Police/Security
Service; and the appointment of a Security Co-ordinator to plan and take forward the implementation of recommendations for enhanced security. Good progress has been made in implementing all of these. There has also been a recent audit of the Parliamentary security contract with the Metropolitan Police.

239. Balancing security with the need to preserve democratic access to Parliament is a perennial challenge. The planned introduction of a modern system of access control has been delayed, but more as the result of contracting difficulties than of resources or commitment. It will be particularly important that robust business cases and investment appraisals are brought forward to ensure that timely decisions on necessary programmes are taken. We do not, however, have separate recommendations to make on security.

Department of Finance and Administration

240. Our recommendations affecting the Department of Finance and Administration in respect of finance, business services and HR are in Chapter 3. Here we comment on the Department’s role in providing services relating to pay, allowances and pensions.

241. The House administers the pay and allowances of over 5,000 people, including Members, their staff and House officials. In many organisations, these functions are now outsourced. In the Commons this happens only in respect of pensions, the reasoning being that the task of administering Members’ expenses and allowances is of a complexity and sensitivity which require the function to be performed in-House and that, this being so, it makes economic sense for the pay of Members and staff also to be handled by the same office. We do not challenge this proposition.

242. We have, however, looked at the quality of the service performed and the responsiveness of the ‘Fees Office’ as it is sometimes known, to Members’ needs. In the course of our review, we heard some concerns expressed that allowances and expenses are now subjected to such detailed scrutiny and regulation via the Green Book that it amounts to a ‘policing’ of Members’ activities, rather than a facilitation of their work. On the other hand, many Members have welcomed the need for allowances to be accounted for in detail, as a protection against any allegations of abuse. On the basis of the recent survey of Members’ views, this was not an area of widespread criticism: 75% of Members responding were either very or extremely satisfied and the majority considered that the rules were interpreted in a fair, helpful and appropriate manner. A similar proportion of Members responding rated the quality of advice on the DFA enquiry and advice telephone helpline equally highly.

243. The alternative to the present system would be to move to a system of self-authorisation and certification, backed up by random spot checks and audit. This would save administration costs, and be in step with the way in which the expenses are handled in other organisations. But it is not evident that such an approach would be sufficient for the Commons or be welcome to Members as a whole, given the degree of external scrutiny to which they are inevitably exposed and the sums involved. The recent press furore over protecting the confidentiality of Members’ correspondence in the context of Freedom of Information, and the way that this has been connected in the public debate to the issue of allowances, demonstrates the problem of a less than fully transparent system.
244. As regards the separate question of how the Administration might be more responsive to Members in this area, we have noted that the Department is already taking steps to ensure that experienced staff are available to handle enquiries. There is also a proposal to offer quick and automatic electronic information on Members’ rate of spend to facilitate their own budgetary management.

245. We recommend that improved on-line information services should be provided to Members about their allowances and expenditure, subject to the outcome of a feasibility study.

**Refreshment Department**

246. The services of the House of Commons Refreshment Department generate considerable interest among Members and others who work on the Parliamentary Estate. This reflects the nature of House business. Members and staff work long days when the House is sitting and have limited opportunities to leave the estate. Eighty-seven per cent of Members and Members’ staff surveyed were regular users of the Department’s services. Satisfaction scores are generally high, the main complaint being that of overcrowding on some days in some outlets. Several Members were inclined to favour an extension of Member-only facilities, but this could not be achieved without making the general overcrowding worse at peak periods.

247. There are two main concerns. The first relates to the level of subsidy met, effectively, by the taxpayer. This has been reduced over the past four years from 50% to 39.6% currently. However, that figure remains significant at £4.7 million and does not take into account the cost of some overhead elements such as rent and utilities. The second relates to the absence of outsourcing which most large organisations now employ to meet their staff catering needs. Both issues have been examined recently by the Administration Committee.

248. The cost may not be unreasonable when compared to the demands placed on the Refreshment Department. For three and a half days per week, thirty-four weeks per year, when the House is sitting, there is a need to provide a full service, while at other times the customer base is greatly reduced. The problem of maintaining an infrastructure to cater for peak demand, but which is under-used for the rest of the year, inevitably adds to overheads. The need to provide special services exclusive to Members, even though the take-up may be limited, is a further factor. The Department now has effective control over costs, with each outlet monitored on a cost-centre basis. We also understand the purchasing arrangements to be well managed; and that the very wide supplier base is not an inefficiency in this particular market.

249. The issue of outsourcing is similarly more complex than would appear at first sight. In principle, the House might have been expected to outsource some or all facilities. In practice, however, the limitations imposed by the nature of the Parliamentary environment — with peaks and troughs of demand, restrictions on the client base and entitlements to dining rights in some outlets — would be constraining factors on a private sector operator, as much as they are on the present in-House management. It is most unlikely, therefore, that an outside contractor could provide the existing level of service without a similar subsidy, especially as there would be a need for a profit margin. Otherwise, any benefit to
the contractor could be achieved only by compromising service and quality levels. Moreover, the staff employed would remain the same and their terms and conditions would be protected under TUPE, thereby limiting the scope for the contractor to reduce inefficiencies to the extent that these persist.

250. One possible option that has been suggested to us would be to test the potential for outsourcing by letting private sector contracts for one or more of the ‘self-standing’ outlets and introducing a degree of competition. But the most attractive outlets are in the modern building of Portcullis House and they are already some of the most efficient parts of the Refreshment Department business. Outsourcing the ‘profitable’ areas of the business while retaining those needing the greatest subsidy does not make good sense. In these circumstances, a hybrid solution becomes less attractive. It would in any case not be a stable arrangement for the longer term.

251. For these reasons, we conclude that the best way forward is for the present catering operation to be benchmarked rigorously against comparators, whether in the public or private sectors, possibly according to the three different categories of services currently provided: restaurants, cafeterias and banqueting. Steps are now being taken to conduct such an exercise.

252. We recommend that benchmarking of catering services should be conducted thoroughly in the interests of quality and value for money.

253. There is of course another catering operation at the other end of the Parliamentary Estate which, although smaller, in many ways mirrors the RD. The Lords Refreshment Department is a completely separate organisation, running cafeterias, restaurants, bars and banqueting in adjoining premises. On the face of it there is a strong case for combining the two Departments and forming a single ‘bi-cameral’ joint catering organisation for Parliament. But this has not found favour with the two Houses so far. In the longer term, integration may offer a better route to improved cost-effectiveness and performance than would outsourcing. Meanwhile, there is informal co-operation between the two catering organisations. We understand that they liaise closely in planning procurement timetables and purchasing contracts, thus sharing expertise and delivering lower prices.

**Parliamentary Information and Communications Technology (PICT)**

254. The Parliamentary IT network and difficulties of internet access was a major area of dissatisfaction among Members at the time of the Braithwaite report.

255. Since then, the issues he identified have been addressed. Members have been provided with IT equipment, including in constituencies. The joint Department for Parliamentary Information and Communication Technology (PICT) has been created, covering both Houses. PICT pulls together IT expertise that was spread among Departments previously, with separate teams working in parallel, and brings improved planning and implementation capacity.

256. Improving IT services remains a priority for the House, and is treated as such in the Commission’s Strategic Plan. PICT faces the challenge of maintaining business as usual — which means the delivery of highly available, secure and efficient IT for Members and staff — while introducing new services (such as mobile computing for Members and wireless
access), progressively bringing together a range of previously separate networks and applications across the Parliamentary Estate, and putting in place technology strategies to meet business needs in the different areas. PICT is also committed to improving knowledge and understanding of Parliament through a radically upgraded website.

257. When our review began, there was significant criticism by Members: the speed and quality of response for calls to helpdesks; technical failures and loss of services from the Parliamentary intranet; the restricted choice of equipment available from central IT provision; and the support available to Members’ constituency offices. These featured in the recent Administration Committee report on information and communication technology services for Members. Over the past few months, progress has been made in addressing these concerns and the service to Members and staff has improved.

258. There remains some Member dissatisfaction with the quality of provision. Some of this seems inevitable: for example, the general difficulty of reconciling the need for standardised solutions for equipment in the interest of cost-control with the preferences of individual users and their particular operations. Another aspect is the importance getting right the basics of good service before moving on to grand designs.

259. Our main concerns are with the scale of PICT’s ambition (“a fully joined up information management strategy for Parliament”) and the costs of the PICT operation as a whole, which have risen steeply, particularly for staff. In view of this, an external health check of the House’s plans for IT development and its capacity to deliver would be prudent. Government Departments have recently had their own plans examined independently. It might be beneficial for Parliament to avail itself of the same service.

260. We recommend that the Cabinet Office Independent Reviewer and Central Sponsor for Information Assurance should be invited to conduct a health check of Parliamentary IT plans and delivery.

**Services to Members’ Staff**

261. No review of services would be complete without considering the support provided to the staff of Members, as distinct from services to Members themselves. This is a complex area for two reasons—

- Members have tended to criticise Members’ staff as a group, in the context particularly of overcrowding at Westminster, yet individually they regard their own staff as absolutely vital to their efficient functioning as Members of Parliament;

- the House Service itself needs at times to distinguish requests made by staff from those made by Members, in terms of both priorities and considerations of legitimacy (for example, ensuring that the service provided is in response to Members’ interests or requirements).

262. In general, we have found the House Service to be responsive to the needs of Members’ staff and conscious of the importance of providing training and assistance, particularly to new recruits and (increasingly) to staff in constituencies. This has been reflected in the largely positive responses by Members’ staff in the recent survey of services.
263. A notable example is the work of the Directorate of Operations in the Department of Finance and Administration which manages a contract for training Members’ staff in IT applications and in ‘soft’ skills, such as dealing with difficult and violent customers. The Department also arranges for an annual grant-in-aid to the w4mp website, which is a rich source of information, advice and career opportunities for Members’ staff. The Library also organises various events and presentations open to Members’ staff, covering both aspects of policy and access to information resources.

264. The House Service has to respond to mixed messages from Members on this (partly perhaps a generational issue) but recent developments have shown an encouraging willingness on the part of the House Service to engage with Members’ staff in accordance with the Commission’s second primary objective, “to provide the advice and services that enable individual Members (and their staff) to perform their Parliamentary duties effectively” (emphasis added). We recommend that the rolling surveys of Members’ satisfaction, which we have recommended as part of the Management Board’s performance measurement system, should also seek the views of a representative cross-section of Members’ staff.
7 Working with the House of Lords

265. Although there is a constitutional necessity to keep the work of the two Houses formally distinct from each other, there is a strong case for enhanced co-operation between them, not least in the promotion of the work of Parliament to the public at large. There is in any case a powerful argument, on efficiency grounds, for support services for both Chambers to be provided on a common basis, particularly as they occupy the same site and operate to broadly similar timetables.

266. In one crucial area of support services a new Department — for Parliamentary Information and Communication Technology (PICT) — has been established. Legislation is currently before Parliament to give effect to this by creating the basis for appropriate employment arrangements for bi-cameral staff. Governance for PICT comes from a Joint Business Systems Board, comprising senior officials from both Houses. The Bill provides for further such joint Departments to be created should this be agreed. There are currently no plans for a further combination of Departments; but the PICT governance structure offers a model for any such organisational arrangement.

267. Nevertheless, combined working with the Lords does exist, in various forms. Parliamentary Estates and Works and some aspects of cleaning are already run under the Serjeant at Arms Department for both Houses, with the Lords reimbursing 40% of the total cost of shared services. Other services such as the Occupational Health, Safety and Welfare Service, the Broadcasting Unit, the Education Service, Central Tours Office and the Parliamentary Office of Science and Technology are provided for both Houses on a similar basis. The House of Lords manages the Parliamentary Archives on behalf of both Houses and the contract for shorthand-writing for select committees is let jointly by both Houses. The Travel Office contract is managed on behalf of both Houses by the House of Commons.

268. It is also evident from our review that there is also a good deal of informal cooperation between the two Houses which works to mutual benefit — for example, frameworks for contracting and purchasing that are made available to the other House on a voluntary basis; and the Serjeant at Arms and Black Rod work closely together on ceremonial, security and contingency planning. Our impression is that relationships between officials at the working level have strengthened over the years and are currently excellent.

269. Nevertheless there would be further mutual benefit, in terms of economies of scale, together with increased flexibility and opportunities for staff development, were more joint services to be established.

270. Should the climate be ripe for further consideration of the benefits of providing more support services jointly with the House of Lords, the order of priority, in terms of practicality, might be as follows—

- Estates and Works: where the only change required would be to convert the position of the Lords from that of customer to full partner;
• the Official Report: where the skills and activities are similar and there is sometimes competition for the same staff;

• the Refreshment Department: where, particularly in the Palace of Westminster, there would be the prospect of rationalisation of kitchens and outlets.

271. A recent debate in the House of Lords on the Parliament (Joint Departments) Bill indicated that the Lords are reluctant to consider further joint services, and the Commons is also likely to want to wait and see how the PICT arrangement settles down before wishing to move forward. For the present, therefore, informal co-operation seems to provide the best way forward, stopping short of Departmental mergers. During this period, benchmarking against each other in respect of services conducted separately would be a helpful spur to improved performance.

272. We recommend that the possibility of providing more services jointly with the House of Lords should be explored, in the interests of efficiency, with a view to the eventual establishment of more joint Departments.
8 Grants to Inter-parliamentary Associations

273. There remains one area where the House does not have control over all the resources necessary to achieve its purposes. In 1990 the Ibbs report recommended that a number of Votes should be consolidated on the Parliamentary budget, including the annual grants-in-aid from the Treasury to the History of Parliament Trust, the British-American Parliamentary Group, the United Kingdom Branch of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association and the British Group of the Inter-Parliamentary Union. In the event the Commission took on only the grant-in-aid to the History of Parliament Trust; the Treasury still makes the grants to the international bodies, now including the British-Irish Inter-Parliamentary Body. Braithwaite made no recommendations on this matter.

274. In 2007/08, the grants-in-aid total £3.3 million: £100,901 for the British-American Parliamentary Group, £1,808,087 for the United Kingdom Branch of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, £1,191,511 (not including £287,000 reserves) for the British Group of the Inter-Parliamentary Union and £204,300 for the British-Irish Inter-Parliamentary Body.

275. The Finance and Services Committee will shortly be studying the case for bringing the four international bodies on the Commission Vote from 2008/09 and will be making its recommendations to the Commission. The Committee will address a number of issues of governance, accountability and sharing responsibility with the Lords. Subject to agreement on these matters, it may be possible to complete the implementation of Ibbs’ recommendations and to remove indirect Government control of the level of Members’ international parliamentary work. **We recommend that the House of Commons Commission should take over responsibility for making grants-in-aid to the four inter-parliamentary bodies.**
9 Implementation

276. This review reiterates much of the Ibbs and Braithwaite prescription, which has been accepted by the authorities of the House. Its recommendations aim to reinforce progress already under way and therefore ought not, by and large, to present an insurmountable challenge to the organisation. The recommendations are, however, demanding in calling for cultural changes in the way the organisation operates — in discarding federalism where it has ceased to serve any purpose, in driving forward cost–consciousness; and above all in instilling a culture of active management, using new techniques based on hard data to determine outcomes.

277. Braithwaite’s legacy included the Office of the Clerk, which has to some extent continued to press forward with the corporate agenda. Our prescription calls for a revamped Office for the Chief Executive, with responsibility for strategic planning, which will use performance management, based on the Balanced Scorecard, to harness the contribution made by each business unit in each Department, to place those contributions in their strategic context, and to manage risk.

278. Implementation of this review’s recommendations will require political authority from the Commission. We hope that the Commission will decide to publish this report, and to expose it to debate in the House or Westminster Hall with the latest Annual Report from the Commission.

279. At a political level, the challenge for the Commission is to find a way of preserving the necessary independence of a self-governing Parliament, while demonstrating robust controls over the use of public resources in delivering the House Service’s three primary objectives of serving the House, its Members and the wider public. In this task, the Commission needs the support of a Finance and Services Committee with a clear mission to scrutinise spending proposals, as well as an energetic Administration Committee to ensure that Members’ needs are always a prime consideration. An independent Chair of the Audit Committee will strengthen accountability. The implementation of these recommendations is more a matter for political decision at the highest level than a task requiring official support.

280. While it is for the Commission to determine the structure of the Management Board, and the limits of its delegated powers, our prescription works with the grain of developments since Ibbs reported in 1990 which have moved the House Service forward to become a more corporate body with a clearer strategic focus. The strengthened role for the Office of the Chief Executive will be the principal means by which the improvements we recommend will be delivered. In the special case of Estates and Works, action is already under way to implement our proposals. We envisage the need for a dedicated implementation team for the report as a whole. This might be undertaken by a team drawn from across the House Service, reporting direct to the Chief Executive and the Management Board, which might subsequently be folded into the enlarged Office of the Chief Executive.
10 Recommendations

Audit Committee

1. A suitably qualified external member of the Audit Committee should become its Chairman. (Paragraph 74)

2. A rolling programme of NAO value-for-money audits should be instituted. (Paragraph 74)

Finance and Services Committee

3. The Finance and Services Committee should operate more as an arm of the Commission, acting under a clear mandate giving the Committee substantial authority on the Commission’s behalf to cover the more routine supervisory issues. (Paragraph 77)

4. The Finance and Services Committee should be mandated to scrutinise proposals made by Member Committees or House officials, where these need to be reconciled, before they are considered by the Commission. (Paragraph 78)

5. The Chairman of Ways and Means should be appointed to the Finance and Services Committee. (Paragraph 79)

6. A member of the Finance and Services Committee, selected on the basis of interest and experience, should be appointed to the Audit Committee, ‘balanced’ by an additional external member. (Paragraph 80)

Administration Committee

7. Individual Members on the Administration Committee should be invited to track particular services — for example, catering or IT — on behalf of the Committee as a whole. (Paragraph 81)

8. The size of membership of the Administration Committee and of the Finance and Services Committee should be reviewed, on the basis that smaller bodies of Committee members are likely to be more effective. (Paragraph 82)

Clerk of the House/Chief Executive

9. The Clerk of the House should continue to perform the dual role of Clerk of the House and Chief Executive/Accounting Officer. (Paragraph 88)

10. Succession planning at the most senior level should address the need for potential Clerks of the House/Chief Executives to gain senior management experience. (Paragraph 89)

11. The method of appointment for the Clerk of the House/Chief Executive should, in future, be by means of competition, open to the (inevitably limited) group of suitably
qualified candidates, with a Selection Board similar to those employed for Permanent Secretaries to Government Departments. (Paragraph 90)

Office of the Chief Executive

12. The scope of the activities of the Office of the Chief Executive should be expanded to embrace planning and performance management functions in relation to the House Service’s objectives and targets, together with an increased communication co-ordination role. (Paragraph 96)

13. The Office of the Chief Executive’s staffing numbers should be increased, and the post of the Head of the Office should be upgraded, in the light of these additional functions and responsibilities. (Paragraph 98)

Delegations

14. Each Head of Department should receive an annual delegation letter, setting out the objectives and targets to be achieved during the year, the budget allocation for the purpose and the common policies, systems and processes to be used and observed in delivery. (Paragraph 99)

Performance Management

15. The House Service should adopt a performance management system based on the Balanced Scorecard and with clear criteria for achieving success, drawn up by the Management Board and the House of Commons Commission. (Paragraph 105)

16. One such success criterion should be improved Members’ satisfaction with services, measured by more regular ‘rolling’ surveys of a proportion of Members. (Paragraph 106)

17. The performance management system should be underpinned by an activity and functional costing system, together with benchmarking against ‘peer’ organisations and areas. (Paragraph 107)

Management Board

18. The changes to the composition of the Management Board should be made soon, but with appropriate action taken to ensure that it is not perceived as downgrading the importance of the services provided by those no longer ‘on the Board’ or their Departments. (Paragraph 112)

19. A more strategic Management Board with a slimmed-down executive membership should be created, to comprise: the Clerk of the House/Chief Executive Deputy Clerk/Chief Operating Officer; Serjeant at Arms/Director of Facilities and Support; Librarian/Director of Information and Communications; Director of Finance and Administration; and Director of Human Resources. (Paragraph 113)

20. Two external advisers (non-executive directors) should be appointed to the Management Board, in the expectation that this will prove as successful as it has in
Government Departments, in supporting the role of the Chief Executive, as well as in helping the Management Board more generally. (Paragraph 116)

21. Individual Heads of Department should have responsibility for delivering agreed cross-cutting objectives or processes on behalf of the Management Board as a whole, acting as senior responsible owners or process owners, on the basis of wide powers granted by the Management Board. (Paragraph 118)

22. Co-ordinating and cross-cutting groups should be reviewed with the objective of reducing their number and maintaining control over growth in future. (Paragraph 119)

Financial Management

23. The Department of Finance and Administration should be strengthened, including by the addition of a management accountant, either by redeployment of staff currently in Departments or by additional external recruitment. (Paragraph 133)

24. Existing financial delegations should be amended to give the Director of Finance and Administration and his senior staff greater control over finance staff in Departments, in terms of performance, professional development and deployment. (Paragraph 133)

25. Finance staff in Departments should have a reporting line to the Department of Finance and Administration, as second reporting or countersigning officers for the reports of Departmental finance staff. (Paragraph 133)

Procurement

26. The Management Board should conduct a budgetary exercise, led by the Director of Finance and Administration, under which each department would be required to present its plans to the Finance and Services Committee on the basis of alternative funding assumptions, to inform decisions on future financial allocations. (Paragraph 138)

27. The emphasis of the effort to improve the House’s procurement activity as a whole should be on building the expertise of contracts managers in Departments to ensure through life value for money is achieved, and accountability for delivering it pinned down, rather than focus predominantly on initial purchase costs. (Paragraph 146)

Human Resources

28. The delegated model in respect of HR functions should be reconsidered, with a view to strengthening strategic and corporate HR functions and removing duplication and diseconomies in the present system. (Paragraph 156)

29. A scheme should be introduced to identify and develop internal talent on a House-wide basis, administered by central HR. (Paragraph 156)
30. The Management Board should include a professionally qualified Director of Human Resources. (Paragraph 157)

**Estates and Works**

31. The Estates and Works Services Directorates should be re-integrated under one Director who would provide overall leadership and ensure coherence, consistency, team working, professionalism and delivery. (Paragraph 169.i)

32. A Programme Office should be set up, the functions of which should be worked up in the light of the external adviser’s recommendations. (Paragraph 169.iii)

33. Ownership of the Estates/Works budget and ownership of the Estate strategy should be pinned down clearly so that financial authority and operational responsibilities are fully aligned. (Paragraph 169.v)

34. The Serjeant’s Finance Unit (SFU) should remain outside the new combined Directorate, as a separate organisation reporting to the Serjeant at Arms: facilitating the works programme in general; assisting the Serjeant at Arms in financial control and governance; and providing the necessary transparency and separation of duties. (Paragraph 169.vi)

35. The SFU should be strengthened beyond its existing advisory function. (Paragraph 169.vii)

36. Levels of delegation for works expenditure should be reviewed and harmonised as between the House of Commons and House of Lords to facilitate synchronisation of decision-making on joint projects. (Paragraph 169.viii)

37. The House’s Resource Framework guidance should be revised in respect of project approval processes, with clarification of what constitutes ‘works’, ‘leases’, ‘consultancy’, etc. (Paragraph 169.ix)

38. Training of project managers should be given high priority; greater reliance on bringing in project managers from the private sector may be required. (Paragraph 169.x)

**Connecting Parliament with the Public**

39. The House should endorse the Administration Committee’s proposals for a dedicated space for learning. (Paragraph 188)

40. The Parliamentary website and the internet generally should be regarded as a key element in fostering close connections between Parliament and the public, and crucially the younger generation, and should be developed and funded accordingly as a priority. (Paragraph 196)

41. The Group on Information for the Public should remain the official-led organisation responsible for developing policy and programmes in this area, but should be given a stronger executive role under the chairmanship of the Director of Information and
Communications, mandated by the Management Boards of both Houses and allocated a budget for this purpose. (Paragraph 202)

42. The House Service should actively support Members in making best use of the Communications Allowance, facilitating where possible savings in joint procurement of capital equipment and top-of-the-line software for publishing hard copy newsletters as well as the design of modern interactive websites. (Paragraph 206)

**Service Delivery**

43. The Clerk of the House should delegate authority to one or more principal deputies to take on more of the task of running the Clerk’s Department. (Paragraph 217)

44. Closer working between the Clerk’s Department and the Library in support of select committees should be developed further. (Paragraph 217)

45. The broader issue of a more proactive House service, to facilitate services to Members and consider the provision of new services, should be examined, in terms of both style and content. This may be a suitable issue for the Management Board. (Paragraph 217)

46. The Library should continue to shift resources from areas where demand is lessening to those where demand is growing, based on a developing cost-effectiveness programme. (Paragraph 221)

47. The Library should review the prospects for more joint working with the House of Lords Library. (Paragraph 222)

48. The Editor of the Official Report should review the means by which Members are given the opportunity to check the texts of their speeches prior to publication. (Paragraph 224)

49. A client relations group should be established within the Serjeant at Arms Department to provide a more responsive and integrated service to Members for accommodation and facilities, including a ‘one-stop shop’ service. It should be achieved by internal redeployment of staff and headed by a senior manager dedicated to this Member-facing role. (Paragraph 234)

50. The head of the client relations group would underpin the role of the Serjeant at Arms as Facilities Director at Management Board level, which will be crucial in ensuring that a positive engagement with Members’ day-to-day requirements is drawn upon to inform corporate planning. (Paragraph 235)

51. Improved on-line information should be provided to Members about their allowances and expenditure, subject to the outcome of a feasibility study. (Paragraph 245)

52. Benchmarking of catering services should be conducted thoroughly in the interests of quality and value for money. (Paragraph 252)
53. The Cabinet Office Independent Reviewer and Central Sponsor for Information Assurance should be invited to conduct a health check of Parliamentary IT plans and delivery. (Paragraph 260)

54. The rolling surveys of Members’ satisfaction, which we have recommended as part of the Management Board’s performance measurement system, should also seek the views of a representative cross-section of Members’ staff. (Paragraph 264)

House of Lords

55. The possibility of providing more services jointly with the House of Lords should be explored, in the interests of efficiency, with a view to the eventual establishment of more joint Departments. (Paragraph 272)

Grants to Inter-parliamentary Associations

56. The House of Commons Commission should take over responsibility for making grants-in-aid to the four inter-parliamentary bodies. (Paragraph 275)
Annex 1: Current governance arrangements

The HOUSE OF COMMONS COMMISSION was created by the House of Commons Administration Act 1978, repealing the nineteenth century House of Commons Offices Acts. Rt Hon Michael J. Martin MP, the Speaker of the House of Commons, takes the central position as ex officio Chair of the Commission. The Act prescribes that two of other Commission members are ex officio: the Leader of the House (currently Rt Hon Jack Straw MP) and a person appointed by the Leader of the Opposition (in practice the Shadow Leader of the House, currently Rt Hon Theresa May MP). There has been significant turnover in both these positions. A convention has grown up in recent years of the Shadow Leader of the House chairing the AUDIT COMMITTEE. The three other positions on the Commission are for Members (who may not be Ministers) to be nominated by the House, in practice, one Member from each of the three main parties. It has become the tradition for the Liberal Democrat backbench member of the Commission (currently Nick Harvey MP) to act as its spokesman, answering oral and written parliamentary questions. The current Labour member of the Commission (Sir Stuart Bell MP) is also Chairman of the Finance and Services Committee, providing a link between this select committee and the Commission, as originally recommended by Ibbs. The present Conservative member on the Commission (Rt Hon David Maclean MP) is a member of the Joint Committee on Security, and like Sir Stuart Bell sits on the Liaison Committee (in his separate capacity as Chairman of the Joint Committee on Statutory Instruments).

This membership has a dual corporate role, sitting as both the Commission, responsible for the Administration Vote, covering management and services, and, under S.O. No. 152D, as the MEMBERS ESTIMATE COMMITTEE, covering the House of Commons: Members Vote (pay, expenses and allowances). There are legal distinctions which prevent the two Votes and bodies from being merged in the interests of clarity and efficiency — the Commission has statutory powers in respect of the House of Commons: Administration Vote, but it is not the statutory authority for the House of Commons: Members Vote, which comes under the Supply Estimates of Government expenditure laid before Parliament by the Chancellor of the Exchequer. At the operational level, however, there is considerable overlap and interrelationship between the two: House officials administer Members’ pay and allowances, and the Clerk of the House is the Accounting Officer for both the Administration and Members Votes.

The FINANCE AND SERVICES COMMITTEE is a select committee appointed under S.O. No. 144 to consider expenditure on and the administration of services for the House and

(a) with the assistance of the Board of Management, to prepare the Estimates for House of Commons: Administration for submission to the House of Commons Commission;

(b) to monitor the financial performance of the House Administration; and
(c) to report to the House of Commons Commission or the Speaker on the financial and administrative implications of recommendations made to them by the Administration Committee.

Prior to 2005, the Finance and Services Committee included the chairmen of the Domestic Committees (Accommodation & Works, Administration, Broadcasting, Catering and Information) and the Deputy Chief Whips from the Government and the Official Opposition. It now consists of eleven Members, chosen for their knowledge and experience of the House.

The present ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE, chaired by Mr Frank Doran MP, was created at the outset of the new Parliament in 2005, when the previous Domestic Committees were disbanded and a single Committee was instituted instead with the following Order of Reference: “to consider the services provided for and by the House and to make recommendations thereon to the House of Commons Commission or to the Speaker. Any such recommendation whose implementation would incur additional expenditure charged to the Estimate for House of Commons: Administration shall also be considered by the Finance and Services Committee” (S.O. No. 139). Although the Administration Committee has one or two executive responsibilities delegated to it by Mr Speaker, its role is in essence advisory.

The HOUSE OF COMMONS SERVICE is led by Malcolm Jack, the Clerk of the House, who is also the Chief Executive, the statutory Corporate Officer of the House of Commons and Accounting Officer. The Clerk of the House attends House of Commons Commission meetings. He chairs the Board of Management that comprises the Heads of the seven Departments through which day-to-day management of business and delivery of services is conducted: the Clerk’s Department (represented by Helen Irwin, the Clerk of Committees); Peter Grant Peterkin, the Serjeant at Arms; Andrew Walker, the Director of Finance and Administration; John Pullinger, the Librarian; Lorraine Sutherland, Editor of the Official Report (Hansard); Sue Harrison, the Director of Catering Services; and Joan Miller, the Director of the Parliamentary Information and Communications Technology (PICT) Department — the last a joint Department with the House of Lords.

In December 2006, the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) published the Report of a Study Group on Benchmarks for Democratic Legislatures, which was supported by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Global Programme for Parliamentary Strengthening, the World Bank Institute and the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs.

Extracts from 2006 CPA Benchmarks for Democratic Legislatures

1.5.1 The Legislature shall provide proper remuneration and reimbursement for parliamentary expenses to legislators for their service, and all forms of compensation shall be allocated on a non-partisan basis.

1.7.1 The Legislature shall have adequate physical infrastructure to enable members and staff to fulfil their responsibilities.

5.1.1 The Legislature shall have an adequate non-partisan professional staff to support its operations including the operations of its committees.

5.1.2 The Legislature, rather than the executive branch, shall control the parliamentary service and determine the terms of employment.

5.1.3. The Legislature shall draw and maintain a clear distinction between partisan and non-partisan staff.

5.1.4 Members and staff of the Legislature shall have access to sufficient research, library, and ICT facilities.

5.2.1 The Legislature shall have adequate resources to recruit staff sufficient to fulfil its responsibilities. The rates of pay shall be broadly comparable to those in the public service.

5.3.1 Recruitment and Promotion of non-partisan staff shall be on the basis of merit and equal opportunity.

5.4.1 The head of the parliamentary service shall have a form of protected status to prevent undue political pressure.

5.4.2 Legislatures should either by legislation or resolution, establish corporate bodies responsible for providing services and funding entitlements for parliamentary purposes and providing for governance of the Parliamentary service.
Annex 3: The House of Commons
Commission Strategic Plan 2006 – 2011

Purpose
The House of Commons Service supports, informs and records the work of the House of Commons as an elected parliamentary chamber in accordance with the decisions of the House and the House of Commons Commission. It makes its work and information about that work widely accessible to the general public and contributes to parliamentary democracy by sharing its knowledge with parliaments and assemblies worldwide. It also maintains the heritage of parliamentary buildings and documents in trust for the public and future generations.

Values
The House of Commons Service seeks to serve the House of Commons, its Committees and Members, and the public, with honesty, probity and political impartiality; strives to achieve high ethical standards, value for money and professional excellence in all that it does; and seeks to be responsive to changing requirements. As an employer, the House of Commons Commission is committed to maximising the personal development of House staff, to valuing diversity and the contribution of all individuals, and to equality of opportunity.

Primary objectives
The House Service’s primary objectives (in order of priority) are:

To provide the advice and services that enable the House and its committees to conduct their business effectively.

To provide the advice and services that enable individual Members (and their staff) to perform their parliamentary duties effectively.

To promote public knowledge and understanding of the work and role of Parliament through the provision of information and access.

Supporting tasks
In support of the primary objectives the House Service also seeks:

To provide a skilled and motivated workforce; giving recognition and reward for achievement and ensuring that all staff realise their full potential regardless of level or background; and promoting diversity.

To provide a healthy, safe and secure physical environment in which the business of the House can be effectively conducted; this includes accommodation, office services, catering and security.
To plan and manage all of the House’s resources to a high standard, achieving value for money and matching current public service standards including in the areas of risk and change management and environmental protection

To maintain the heritage and integrity of the Palace of Westminster and other buildings, objects and documents for the benefit of future generations

To ensure that information is well-managed in pursuit of the primary objectives, in part by exploiting technology effectively.

To maintain a good working relationship with the House of Lords, particularly in the provision of shared services; and to share information and best practice with other parliaments and assemblies, and to co-operate with other organisations that can assist the House Service in its work

**Priorities for the planning period**

Over the planning period there will be an on-going requirement to develop services and update working practices. This will result from the changing demands of the House, external factors such as new legislation, and the continuing need to ensure that resources are managed in an effective and efficient manner. In this context, plans will have to adapt to changing circumstances. However, against this background, the anticipated priority areas for the period 2006-2011 are:

**Security**

A priority for the current planning period will be to ensure that security arrangements are appropriate to the assessed level of threat and that contingency and business continuity plans are developed and maintained so as to reduce the impact of any disruption caused by a terrorist attack or other unplanned incident

**Public information**

Members as elected representatives have primary responsibility for maintaining links between Parliament and the public, but there are areas where an impartial House Service can and should support this by making the work and role of Parliament better understood. Development, and better co-ordination, of public information, visitor and education services will be a priority area for the planning period: major projects in the early years will include a radical redesign of the Parliament website and, if approved by the House, a visitor centre.

**Information Management and ICT**

In the previous planning period the House made substantial investments in new information systems including the House Administrative Information System (HAIS) and Parliamentary Information Management Services (PIMS). In addition, the creation of the Parliamentary ICT function will promote unified approaches that are designed to pay dividends. A priority for the current planning period will be to exploit those investments to
introduce improved services and more effective ways of working. This will be done in the context of a more coherent approach to information management.

**Human Resources**

The provision of the high quality services required by the House and its Members depends to a large degree on the availability of an appropriately skilled and motivated workforce. Priorities for the current planning period will be: improved mechanisms for career development within a competencies framework ensuring that the House Service benefits from diversity in its workforce and the enhancement of management skills at all levels.

**Accommodation and works**

Space on the Parliamentary Estate is at a premium. During the planning period it will be necessary to take a strategic look at how space is used to ensure a good alignment with the delivery of primary objectives. It will also be necessary to develop a long term investment strategy that will provide accommodation that is fit for purpose and is maintained to an appropriate standard.

**Planning and management**

A priority for the planning period will be to further develop systems of management and internal control in line with best practice, so that the House is able to comply consistently with legal and financial requirements and demonstrate that resources are being managed in an efficient and cost-effective way.

More detailed strategies will be developed in each of these six priority areas to provide a basis for planning over the period to 2011. These strategies will set out what the Board aims to achieve by the end of the period, milestones towards delivery and an assessment of risk (i.e. things that might prevent delivery). During the planning period progress will be quantified and reported against.

**Resources**

Subject to decisions of the House, the Board of Management aims to manage core services at a level of expenditure no higher than the ceiling previously agreed for 2006/07, adjusted for inflation. The Board will continue to review existing services to identify efficiency savings that can be re-cycled to finance planned investment. However, additional resources could well be required to meet future security requirements and a number of high-value works projects that are fundamental to the maintenance of the Parliamentary Estate.

*Adopted by the House of Commons Commission on 18 July 2005*

The House of Commons Commission appointed Sir Robin Ibbs KBE in May 1990 to report on whether the responsibilities for the management and services of the House of Commons and its facilities, then divided between itself, the Select Committee on House of Commons (Services), the Department of the Environment and the Leader of the House could be brought together with a view to ensuring that so far as possible there is a co-ordinated management and decision-making structure under the control of the House, which can adequately respond to Members’ needs and demands for services, and determine priorities between them. Sir Robin reported in November 1990. The Recommendations of the Ibbs Report are set out below.

“We have identified the House of Commons Commission as the body which should take the lead in setting in hand the changes that are needed. But they will not succeed unless everyone is committed to them. Above all, Members’ co-operation will be needed both during the process of change, and in operating the new arrangements. In the light of our findings and conclusions we recommend that the House of Commons Commission should:

**Policy**

(a) Play a wider and more active part in determining policy for services in the House of Commons wherever these entail expenditure, directing their execution and development, and controlling their finances. The Commission’s role should be strategic, leaving the detailed work to be done by Committees and House officials.

(b) Seek the modification of the existing domestic select committee structure. The Select Committee on House of Commons (Services) itself should be replaced by a Finance and Services Committee, charged with providing financial and other advice to the Commission. The present five sub-Committees of the Services Committee should be replaced by four freestanding committees covering catering; accommodation and works; library, publications and information technology; and administration. These committees should represent Members’ interests as consumers in determining the provision of services to the House.

**Organisation and systems**

(c) Secure the introduction of a comprehensive financial management system and the reform of the Administration Department to develop and operate it.

(d) Endorse new terms of reference for the Board of Management making clear the Board’s enhanced corporate management role; and its responsibility for giving advice and support on financial matters to the Accounting Officer, the Finance and Services Committee and the Commission.
Staff

(e) Make clear the Clerk’s overall management responsibility, as Accounting Officer and primus inter pares, for the execution of policy in relation to services.

(f) Appoint a suitably qualified and experienced Director of Finance to head the new Finance and Administration Department and to provide professional support to the Clerk, the Finance and Services Committee and the Commission.

(g) Appoint a suitably qualified Director of Works together with the necessary supporting staff, to provide, through the Serjeant at Arms, professional support to the Clerk, the Finance and Services Committee and the Commission. It will be for the House of Lords to consider whether the Director of Works should provide similar support to that House under the terms of a suitable agreement between the two authorities.

Finance

(h) Once a financial management system has been successfully put in place, and key appointments made, assume responsibility, progressively, for all House of Commons expenditure, except the Members’ salaries Vote. We suggest that these changes should be completed by the beginning of the financial year 1992/93.

(i) Seek an arrangement under which the accounts and performance measures relating to House of Commons expenditure will be examined regularly by the National Audit Office and reviewed by the Public Accounts Committee.

Implementation

(j) Charge a single person within the House with responsibility, on behalf of the Commission for the successful implementation and execution of these reforms. The Commission should also consider what outside assistance it may need, to provide advice on progress.

(k) As an interim measure while the changes are being introduced, issue a statement for the information of Members and staff describing the existing arrangements and how individuals should go about getting complaints dealt with.”

The House of Commons Commission invited Mr Michael Braithwaite to undertake a review of the system of management and decision-making responsibilities for services to the House which was set up following the inquiry in 1990 by Sir Robin Ibbs. The Braithwaite report was published in July 1999. The table below includes a commentary on the expected benefit and current status of each of his recommendations.

A team of consultants led by Mr Michael Braithwaite carried out a further review (Braithwaite 2) between February and July 2000 of the role and structure of the Parliamentary Works Directorate and its relationship with the other operations of the Serjeant at Arms Department, which is discussed in Chapter 4 of this report.

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<tr>
<th>RECOMMENDATION</th>
<th>PARA</th>
<th>EXPECTED BENEFIT</th>
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<tr>
<td>The House of Commons Commission</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Commission should remain the overall supervisory and policy-making body supported by the Finance and Services Committee and Board of Management. Commissioners should, as at present, have real and extensive knowledge of the House</td>
<td>15.2 and 15.3</td>
<td>Effective exercise of leadership and authority (without an unrealistic increase in volume of business or frequency of meetings)</td>
<td>No change required.</td>
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<td>Items must be thoroughly prepared for Commission consideration; there should be tough notice periods, and consistent filtering of less important business</td>
<td>15.4</td>
<td>A strategic role for the Commission with delegation of subordinate business for more effective discharge of business</td>
<td>Tough notice periods are enforced; papers are properly prepared; occasionally unplanned business is put on the agenda by Members at the last moment.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Authority to approve variations to plans and estimates should be delegated to the Finance and Services Committee, or to the Clerk, on a case-by-case basis</td>
<td>15.4</td>
<td>Effective delegation</td>
<td>This is usually done.</td>
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<td>RECOMMENDATION</td>
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<td>Valid costed options should be provided where possible</td>
<td>15.4</td>
<td>Better quality of investment appraisals offering real choices</td>
<td>Guidance on business cases and approval limits has been consolidated and strengthened in the Resource Framework introduced in 2005. Further work is required to ensure that business cases conform to best practice in all parts of the House Service. The approach to business cases is due to be revised in summer 2007. The Resource Framework is also due to be updated in 2007. Face-to-face training on preparation of business cases was delivered in spring 2007.</td>
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<td>The Commission should agree a longer-term programme of meeting dates to encourage more orderly preparation of business</td>
<td>15.4</td>
<td>Better planning of high level business / effective leadership</td>
<td>Future meeting dates are set well in advance.</td>
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<td>The Secretary to the Commission should retain his present role, and be supported by the Office of the Clerk</td>
<td>15.5</td>
<td>Improved support for the Commission at official as well as political (Finance and Services Committee) level</td>
<td>No change in the Secretary’s role required.</td>
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<tr>
<td>RECOMMENDATION</td>
<td>PARA</td>
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<td>The Commission should approve a strategic plan, covering overall policies for the provision of services, long-term resource priorities, development priorities, approach to House-wide issues, the extent to which elastic demand should be met, and response to factors outside the control of the House administration. This should be in place for the next Parliament, and should be updated annually in the context of the 4-year review of financial plans.</td>
<td>12.8 and 15.7 to 15.10</td>
<td>Better management and delivery of services, based on the establishment of agreed high level priorities and allocation of resources accordingly, rather than an incremental approach based on previous decisions.</td>
<td>An outline strategic plan was agreed by the Commission in 2001 setting out the values and purpose of the House administration; its tasks and priorities; and the financial strategy for the period. The Board of Management implemented the strategy via more detailed annual corporate business plans (originally 'plans of work'). The 2001 Strategy was subsequently reviewed by the Board, which considered that it had “provided a valuable framework within which the Board of Management has been able to operate and plan”. The Commission agreed a new plan in 2005 to cover the period 2006-2011.</td>
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<td>Better and more comprehensive information on the likely effects of changes in the level and pattern of use of the Office Cost Allowance will be needed to inform strategic judgements both by the Commission and the Board of Management.</td>
<td>12.16</td>
<td>Improved information on important expenditure trends on bids from the Administration Vote will enable consequent demands for services to be better planned and met.</td>
<td>OCA no longer exists but proposed changes to other allowances are costed, and consequences assessed by MEC.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RECOMMENDATION</td>
<td>PARA</td>
<td>EXPECTED BENEFIT</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Commission should have a high-level version of the</td>
<td>15.11</td>
<td>Improved information to aid strategic direction and supervision</td>
<td>Although moves towards this were made in 2001, these have been discontinued.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Board of Management monthly report</td>
<td>(see also 5.46)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Commission decisions should be communicated more</td>
<td>15.14</td>
<td>More effective implementation by the Administration and greater awareness by</td>
<td>Decisions are distributed to key officials quickly and published on internet.</td>
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<tr>
<td>fully to interested parties</td>
<td></td>
<td>Members</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Commission’s Annual Report should reflect</td>
<td>15.15</td>
<td>Improved communication and information for staff, customers and stakeholders</td>
<td>The Commission Annual Report (CAR) is now set out on a thematic not Departmental</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>improvements in financial and other information, and</td>
<td></td>
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<td>basis, according to the objectives and tasks in the strategic plan.</td>
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<tr>
<td>should set out the main elements of the strategic plan</td>
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<td>Unaudited financial information is included in the CAR. The aim for 2007 is to</td>
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<td>publish the 2006/07 CAR at the same time as the resource accounts (but not as one</td>
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<td>document). Faster closing of the accounts means that this should be achieved: in</td>
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<td>2006 the two were published only two weeks apart.</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Finance and Services Committee (F&amp;S)</td>
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<tr>
<td>F&amp;S should be smaller, and act as an Executive Committee of the Commission</td>
<td>15.18</td>
<td>Improved policy direction. A more focused Committee working more closely with the Commission on expenditure and services</td>
<td>This recommendation was put to one side by the Commission in 2000.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It should have 7 members: 2 Commissioners, the Government and Opposition Deputy Chief Whips, and 3 back-benchers, with a quorum of 3. It will be for consideration whether the nomination Motion should be made on behalf of the Commission</td>
<td>15.19</td>
<td>Improved policy direction. A more focused Committee working more closely with the Commission on expenditure and services</td>
<td>This recommendation was put to one side by the Commission in 2000.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F&amp;S’s Orders of Reference should be simplified, and include the possibility of directions from the Commission (15.20). It should act in an exclusively deliberative role but continue to have all the normal powers of a Select Committee</td>
<td>15.26</td>
<td>As above</td>
<td>This recommendation was put to one side by the Commission in 2000.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It should monitor progress towards performance targets</td>
<td>15.27</td>
<td>As above</td>
<td>This recommendation was put to one side by the Commission in 2000.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RECOMMENDATION</td>
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<tr>
<td>It should have the monthly high-level report prepared for the Commission, expanded as necessary</td>
<td>15.27</td>
<td>As above</td>
<td>This recommendation was put to one side by the Commission in 2000.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F&amp;S and the Board of Management should meet jointly from time to time</td>
<td>15.21 and 13.51</td>
<td>A working relationship akin to executive (Board of Management) and non-executive (Finance and Services) directors</td>
<td>This recommendation was put to one side by the Commission in 2000. Nevertheless the Board has held joint meetings with F&amp;S, most recently in December 2005.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F&amp;S minutes should go to the Commission, the Board of Management and to other managers and budget holders as necessary</td>
<td>15.29</td>
<td>Transparency Joined-up governance</td>
<td>This recommendation was put to one side by the Commission in 2000.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Chairman of F&amp;S should play a wider role, but without formal executive powers. The possibility of a salary attaching to this post should be considered by the Review Body on Senior Salaries</td>
<td>15.23 to 15.25</td>
<td>Advice and support to the Speaker Advice and guidance to the House Service in responding to suggestions and complaints from Members Close liaison with the Domestic Committees</td>
<td>This recommendation was drawn to the attention of the SSRB, but was not covered by the Review Board’s current remit. However, the post has attracted an additional salary following a resolution of the House on 13 July 2005.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Secretary to the Commission should continue to be Clerk of F&amp;S</td>
<td>15.30</td>
<td>Close relations between Commission and Finance and Services Committee Joined-up governance</td>
<td>No change required.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RECOMMENDATION</td>
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<tr>
<td>Domestic Committees</td>
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<tr>
<td>The domestic committees should be retained as select committees</td>
<td>15.33</td>
<td>representing views of the House, including on ‘political issues’; direct involvement of members in advising on service provision</td>
<td>The House decided to amalgamate the domestic committees into the single Administration Committee after 2005 election.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Commission should be able to instruct domestic committees as well as delegating matters to them</td>
<td>15.34</td>
<td>Authoritative governance</td>
<td>This recommendation was put to one side by the Commission in 2000.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The committees must operate according to the Ibbs prescription, making policy recommendations but not exercising executive authority except as authorised to do so by the Commission</td>
<td>15.34</td>
<td>Greater clarity in respective responsibilities, as between</td>
<td>See below.</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Commission (policy decisions)</td>
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<td>Offices of the House (service delivery)</td>
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<td>Committees (advisory)</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Overcoming an adversarial relationship between Committees and Offices of the House</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>A detailed statement of the committees’ role and method of operation should be authorised by the Commission</td>
<td>15.34</td>
<td>As above</td>
<td>The creation of Administration Committee gave the opportunity for this to happen, in the form of a protocol under SO 139. On appointment, the present Clerk of the House took immediate steps to try to lessen the adversarial relationship referred to by more direct and better communication with the Committee.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>RECOMMENDATION</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>The committees should co-operate with Officers of the House in the style of non-executive and executive directors of boards</td>
<td>15.34</td>
<td>Overcoming adversarial relationships / behaviours</td>
<td>The merger of the domestic committees initially increased difficulties in this area. There is a need to establish a shared sense of purpose, involving constructive rather than adversarial criticism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The committees should no longer have the power to appoint specialist advisers</td>
<td>15.34</td>
<td>Avoidance of polarisation between Committees and Offices of the House</td>
<td>The Administration Committee has appointed specialist advisers for specific inquiries to good effect. Independent expert outside advice can help provide the Committee with the knowledge and experience necessary to assess how parts of the House Service are performing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Departmental paper should be submitted to a domestic committee without being approved by the Board of Management, or under arrangements made by the Board</td>
<td>15.34</td>
<td>Ensuring that proposals take full account of the strategic framework laid down by the Commission</td>
<td>Papers are generally submitted by heads of Department – the nature of prior consultation varies with the subject matter, but there is generally good co-ordination between interested parties.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Any recommendation from a domestic committee to the Commission or F&amp;S should be accompanied by a formal statement of costs and benefits</td>
<td>15.34</td>
<td>Awareness of costs and expenditure implications within the agreed policy framework</td>
<td>Formal statements are not used but recommendations are costed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<tr>
<td>The Commission should review the operation of the domestic committees towards the end of this Parliament or early in the next</td>
<td>15.35</td>
<td>The need for the Committee to work more co-operatively with the Offices of the House, jointly discussing problems and working towards solutions</td>
<td>The House decided to merge the domestic committees into the Administration Committee after 2005 election.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Members and staff could be made generally aware of the work of the domestic committees through the Whip and the Intranet</td>
<td>11.18 to 11.21 and 15.34</td>
<td>Better informed staff, customers and stakeholders</td>
<td>The Administration Committee is very transparent in its operation, publishing discursive minutes on the Internet and sending regular e-mail updates on its work to all Members</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The operation of the domestic committees should be reviewed by the Commission towards the end of this Parliament or early in the next</td>
<td>15.35</td>
<td>More informal arrangements may be needed if these recommendations fail to achieve the directives</td>
<td>The domestic committee structure was revised following the 2005 General Election, with the previous five committees being consolidated into a single Administration Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The responsibilities of the Broadcasting Committee should be taken over by the Administration Committee, and the Broadcasting Committee abolished</td>
<td>15.36 and 15.37</td>
<td>Rationalisation</td>
<td>The Broadcasting Committee was consolidated into the Administration Committee in 2005 as part of the broader changes to the domestic committees – see recommendation 5.35.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<tr>
<td>House Departments</td>
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<tr>
<td>A possible reorganisation of Departments should be considered by the Commission in time for implementation early in the next Parliament if necessary</td>
<td>15.68</td>
<td>Improvement and rationalisation of service delivery, possibly including more outsourcing, subject to the availability of better financial information to improve choices and avoidance of unnecessary turbulence</td>
<td>This recommendation was not addressed precisely in those terms; however, the last parliament was, nevertheless, a period of significant change for departments. All departments, in particular the Serjeant’s Department, were affected by the work to establish the Parliamentary ICT Service; the Departments of the Official Report and the Library conducted far-reaching reviews of their operations; the Refreshment Department made a substantial cut in the catering subsidy (which involved a significant reassessment of service levels); and much of the Clerk’s Department and the Department of Finance and Administration were subject to external review.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The momentum of one-a-year strategic reviews of each House Department needs to be maintained |

<p>| | 4.71 | Strategic management | The Board concluded that reviews of departments in isolation would encourage the silo, non-corporate, approach that the rest of Braithwaite sought to break down, and that a more cross-departmental approach was appropriate: actions have included the work of GIP on cross-departmental issues relating to information for the public, the Cummins Review that led to the creation of PICT and cross-departmental VFM studies as part of the internal review programme. |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RECOMMENDATION</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Clerk of the House</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Clerk should have formal line responsibility for the other Heads of Department, reflected in an Instrument of Delegation made by the Commission. Heads of Department should retain a right of access to the Commission on matters which are of vital importance to their Departments and which cannot be solved in any other way</td>
<td>15.44 and 15.45</td>
<td>Corporate working and direction</td>
<td>The first part of this recommendation was implemented in a revised Instrument of Delegation, and the second was enshrined in a statement of practice adopted by the Board in November 2000.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An Office of the Clerk should be established to support the work of the Clerk of the House (and the Chairman of F&amp;S in administration business), to help co-ordinate the work of the Board of Management and F&amp;S in serving the Commission, co-ordinate submissions, chase progress, provide support for the Commission if required, and to provide a secretariat for the Board of Management</td>
<td>15.47</td>
<td>Enabling the Clerk to discharge the function of Chief Executive</td>
<td>The Office of the Clerk was established in 2000 to support the Clerk in his role as Chief Executive, the Board of management and its second-tier groups. The Clerk holds weekly meetings with staff from the Office and the Secretary to the Commission/Clerk to F&amp;S Committee to co-ordinate the Board of Management and F&amp;S in serving the Commission. Direct support by the Office of the Clerk to the Chairman of the F&amp;S Committee involves attendance of the Head of Office at Chairman’s briefing and all F&amp;S meetings.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
RECOMMENDATION

The Office of the Clerk might consist of 3 administrative and 2 support staff selected by the Clerk, and should be located close to the Clerk.

There should be a central point where media enquiries affecting the Commission and the House administration could be dealt with.

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<th>PARA</th>
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<tr>
<td>15.48</td>
<td>A high quality, strategic function (not more bureaucracy)</td>
<td>The Office of the Clerk – as envisaged by this recommendation – consists of four staff: Head of Office (1<em>SCS1), Clerk’s Private Secretary (1</em>A2), Senior Management Groups Secretary (1<em>A2) &amp; Office Manager (1</em>C). An internal communications function has been added and part of the Media and Communications Team (see 15:50 below) are also managed by the Office.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.50</td>
<td>Responsiveness and speaking with one voice at official level on House spending and administration</td>
<td>A Media and Communications Team has been established to provide a centrally-managed single point of contact for the media. In addition to responding to media enquiries, the team seeks to promote the work and role of Parliament, in particular through the work of Select Committee Media Officers. To avoid possible conflicts of interest, the Commission retains its own media adviser.</td>
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<td>RECOMMENDATION</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Board of Management</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Board should continue to perform the role foreseen by Ibbs. Methods of operation should be made more flexible, continuing its use of working groups and outside advice, and co-opting others when required</td>
<td>4.72</td>
<td>Improved planning, consideration of strategic options, more effective delivery by Departments and better governance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A revised Instrument of Delegation will need to reflect the developing role of the Board</td>
<td>15.51 and 15.52</td>
<td>Strategic management: The point where estimates, budgets, performance targets and results are brought together Better preparation through subordinate and cross-cutting subject groups, better liaison with the Finance and Services Committee</td>
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<td>RECOMMENDATION</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Board should develop and extend its use of preparatory and supporting committees. The present ‘cross-cutting’ groups should have greater equivalence with PMC and PMC(F) and the Information Working Party should become permanent, possibly adding information within the organisation to its remit.</td>
<td>15.53 and 15.54</td>
<td>Better preparation of business and decisions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The work of the groups should be reported in the Commission Annual Report, but as part of the Board’s contribution.</td>
<td>15.57</td>
<td>Corporate working and governance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other bodies established by the Board should be subject to ‘sunset clauses’.</td>
<td>15.58</td>
<td>Efficiency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Board should make greater use of cross-Departmental project structures and processes.</td>
<td>15.59</td>
<td>Corporate working</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RECOMMENDATION</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Board should review capital expenditure regularly, making recommendations via F&amp;S to the Commission</td>
<td>15.60</td>
<td>Improved management of major projects; control of expenditure; value for money; accountability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Board of Management must fully adopt corporate behaviour</td>
<td>4.72</td>
<td>When Board Members have agreed a course of action, they take responsibility for its implementation in their area of business / departments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Members of the Board of Management, and senior Officers in Departments, need additional training in financial and management skills and in the handling of issues within a corporate framework. This should extend downwards into Departments to improve the quality of management and to aid succession planning</td>
<td>4.63, 4.72 and 15.65</td>
<td>Improved quality of financial and general management throughout the organisation</td>
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<td>RECOMMENDATION</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Clerk and the Board of Management need better corporate information reported to them monthly</td>
<td>5.46</td>
<td>Better informed discussions about the provision of services – levels, cost, priorities and method of delivery.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Board of Management should have a close relationship with F&amp;S and meet jointly from time to time</td>
<td>15.21 and 15.51</td>
<td>Aligning service delivery with policy control and the interests of customers (Members, public)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Departmental paper should be submitted to a domestic committee without being approved by the Board, or under arrangements made by the Board</td>
<td>15.34</td>
<td>Operating within the strategic framework set by the Commission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Board should be supported by the Office of the Clerk, and a member of that Office should be its Secretary</td>
<td>15.62, see also 4.72</td>
<td>A more strategic and corporate approach to the management of finance and services</td>
</tr>
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<td>RECOMMENDATION</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Department of the Clerk of the House should be separately represented on the Board</td>
<td>15.63</td>
<td>Corporate working: enabling the Clerk to discharge his CEO functions by removing the responsibility to represent his own Department at Board level</td>
</tr>
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</table>

**Financial management and information**

Techniques of performance measurement should be further developed, with greater consistency between measurements applied to similar activities

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<tr>
<th>PARA</th>
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<tr>
<td>5.18</td>
<td>Enabling managers to assess the economy, efficiency and effectiveness of their work; and providing benchmarks for productivity and efficiency gains</td>
<td>Work has been undertaken to develop performance measurement at both departmental and corporate levels. However, identifying satisfactory high-level PIs for core businesses remains an issue. The UK inter-parliamentary Contact Group of finance directors and senior administrators is currently sponsoring joint work in this area, with a view to developing measures which can be benchmarked between parliaments.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.20</td>
<td>As above</td>
<td>See above. Some performance indicators have been added to the Corporate Business Plan. However, it was decided to embed resource budgeting via the delegated model before moving to the next stage of developing a cost-attribution model. This in turn is needed before efficiency-based performance measures can be introduced on a consistent basis. Work on the costing model is planned for 2007/08. In the meantime, departments have developed a range of individual output-based measures, some of which are reported to the Board.</td>
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More comprehensive performance measures are needed in the context of resource accounting and budgeting
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<tr>
<td>Cost information needs extensive development, both to assist performance measurement and to inform decisions on possible outsourcing, and relocation or multiple use of facilities. It should lead to comparison with best practice elsewhere, and benchmarking of similar activities</td>
<td>5.48 to 5.54</td>
<td>As above</td>
<td>See above. In the context of resource budgeting costs of pension contributions and fixed asset depreciation have been delegated to departments.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corporate information should be reported monthly to the Board of Management with higher level abstracts for the Commission and the Finance and Services Committee. Improved lower-level information should go to Departments and individual managers</td>
<td>5.46, 15.11, 15.27 and 5.47</td>
<td>A ‘single version of the truth’, available at different levels of detail for the respective purposes of the organisation – strategic policy, management and executive</td>
<td>The Board receives quarterly reports on performance measures and activity indicators. These are supplemented by regular finance papers. Finance papers (e.g. on estimated outturns) also go forward to F&amp;S and the Commission.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accounting systems should be converged; there should be better coverage, with less duplication; and Departments should have better access. The ability of the PDVN to handle business-critical systems of this kind should be evaluated</td>
<td>5.56</td>
<td>Convergence, coverage, integrated systems able to be tailored to meet local requirements</td>
<td>This has been implemented via the HAIS and HAIS 2 programmes (e.g. RD accounting consolidated in main system, access to system for finance staff in departments, clarification of roles in the ‘delegated model’).</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Board of Management should review capital expenditure regularly on the basis of a report from DoFA, making recommendations via F&amp;S to the Commission. The timing should allow any decisions to be taken into account in the preparation of Departments’ business plans and of the Estimates</td>
<td>15.60</td>
<td>Improved management of major project</td>
<td>Most capital expenditure is on works and IT projects, which are planned and managed on a bicameral basis. The Board assesses the overall investment programme once a year in its three-year forward look exercise, in time for the preparation of business plans for the following year. The Parliamentary Estate Board and the Joint Business Systems Board monitor the works and ICT programmes on behalf of the two management boards. This system is still bedding in and could be further developed to ensure that appropriate issues are escalated to Board level. The F&amp;S Committee receives regular reports on works/estates and on other major projects e.g. redesign of the Parliament website.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Audit</td>
<td>15.70</td>
<td>Improved assurance including to the Accounting Officer</td>
<td>VFM studies are an element of each financial year’s audit programme. IRS’s partnership with PwC has strengthened this strand of work. Recent examples include Cleaning and Agency and Casual Staffing. Forthcoming VFM reports include handling of Parliamentary Questions and Parliamentary Office of Science and Technology (POST).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
An Audit Committee should be established, with a membership of: two members of the Commission (neither to be members of F&S); the Clerk of the House; the Director of Finance and Administration; and someone with appropriate qualifications from outside the House.

The Audit Committee should report to the Commission.

The Audit Committee should produce an annual report, which would be published with that of the Commission.

Para 15.73

- Improved governance
- Assurance that reforms are having intended effect
- Independent (external) check on proceedings

Para 15.74

- Governance

Para 15.75

- Adequate separation of authority and independence from the Board of Management

Current Status

This recommendation was implemented. In 2004, on creation of the Members Estimate Committee and its sub-committee the Members Estimate Audit Committee, the Audit Committee was renamed the Administration Estimate Audit Committee. Following revised Treasury guidance, the Accounting Officer and DoFA are no longer members of the Committee, but attend meetings. Also following the revised guidance from the Treasury, there are now two external members of the Committee, one of whom is a qualified accountant.

The Audit Committee reports formally to the Commission once a year in the form of an annual report, which is also published, as an annex to the CAR. The Chairman and one of the Members of the Audit Committee are also members of the Commission. They report issues to the Commission throughout the year as appropriate.

Implemented. See 15.75 above.
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>RECOMMENDATION</th>
<th>PARA</th>
<th>EXPECTED BENEFIT</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Department of Finance and Administration (DFA)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Departments must be explicit about the services they need from the DoFA, using two-way Service Level Agreements (SLAs) to supplement a spirit of co-operation. SLAs should be simple, quantitative where possible, and have mechanisms for review. They should be formulated on a corporate basis and be approved by the Board of Management</td>
<td>6.5 and 6.6</td>
<td>Improved quality and speed of service from DFA</td>
<td>The arrangements were reviewed and formalised as the ‘delegated model’ in the course of the HAIS 2 programme.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The DFA needs to gain greater credibility and acceptance amongst other Departments if it is to play an effective role in the new arrangements. It should maintain and increase emphasis on customer satisfaction and quality of service, explain and support initiatives effectively and be realistic about the ability of the House organisation to change</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>Increased customer satisfaction</td>
<td>DFA has developed customer relationships with all departments by a number of means, including feedback mechanisms. This work has been led by a new Business Development Director (now Deputy Director). The HAIS 2 programme and the delegated model for finance and HR has clarified roles and relationships.</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Better communication and cooperation within the House Service as a whole</td>
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<td>RECOMMENDATION</td>
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<tr>
<td>It should improve its knowledge of the business of other Departments through training and familiarisation, supplemented by shadowing, mentoring and some cross-posting</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>As above</td>
<td>DFA trains all its staff on wider House issues. For example staff seminars on broader issues are held regularly: the most recent seminars have been a talk about the work of the Commission by the Commission Secretary, and a talk about the work of whips by a Government whip. All new DFA staff undergo House-wide induction.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Options for the future division of the finance and personnel functions between the centre and Departments should be kept under review. A model should be developed for the personnel function</td>
<td>6.10</td>
<td>A more corporate approach to finance and personnel matters would provide a clearer strategic and policy framework within which explicit delegations can take place to Departments to better enable them to deliver their objectives</td>
<td>The arrangements were reviewed and formalised as the ‘delegated model’ in the course of the HAIS 2 programme.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There is a strong case for the next Director of Finance and Administration also to come from outside the House service, probably from Whitehall. Mentoring should be used to help the process of adjustment to the House environment</td>
<td>6.13</td>
<td>Introduction of skills and experience from outside. The ability to challenge House culture</td>
<td>No appointment has been made to this post since the Braithwaite report. The Commission would have strong views on such an appointment.</td>
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<td>RECOMMENDATION</td>
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<tr>
<td>Works</td>
<td>7.12</td>
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<td>Works are planned and managed on a bicameral basis. The Parliamentary Estate Board monitors the works programme on behalf of the two management boards. This system is still bedding in and could be further developed to ensure that appropriate issues are escalated to board level. The F&amp;S Committee receives regular reports on works/estates and on other major projects e.g. redesign of the Parliament website.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The phasing of the process must ensure that the necessary Estimates provision is not a foregone conclusion, The Board should establish priorities, approved by F&amp;S and the Commission, for the Director’s planning of the next edition of the programme</td>
<td>7.24</td>
<td></td>
<td>The Board considers the forward works programme in the light of advice from the Estate Board in advance of the Estimate being agreed. The development of the 25-year Estate Strategy is at an early stage. An outside adviser has been appointed to take forward the process and to make it responsive to prioritising and long-term needs.</td>
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<tr>
<td>The works client and supplier functions should be re-examined, possibly distinguishing more sharply between formulating and fulfilling requirements, with the aim of making the House a tougher commercial customer</td>
<td>7.26</td>
<td></td>
<td>This was taken forward via the ‘Braithwaite 2’ Review.</td>
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<td>RECOMMENDATION</td>
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<tr>
<td>There should be an early and rapid review of the role and structure of the Parliamentary Works Directorate, drawing on work already under way. The review should take into account the interrelationship of the different elements of the Department of the Serjeant at Arms, and our recommendations on information technology. Close consultation with the authorities of the House of Lords will be necessary.</td>
<td>7.27</td>
<td>and 7.28</td>
<td>This was taken forward via the ‘Braithwaite 2’ Review.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Information Technology</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>There must be a move to a corporate structure and approach, and central control of infrastructure and standards by the Parliamentary Communications Directorate. PCD should be able to help Departments with particular applications for their own businesses.</td>
<td>8.24</td>
<td>Better value for money Better performance and achievement of standards. A more resilient system House-wide</td>
<td>This has been fully implemented with the creation of PICT although the process of PICT’s integration into the House Service is still continuing as is its development in providing services to Members.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two-way service level agreements should be negotiated between Departments and PCD. These should be simple, quantitative where possible, and have mechanisms for review.</td>
<td>8.24</td>
<td>Building confidence in the IP Department’s ability to deliver</td>
<td>Some work on SLAs was undertaken by PCD, but they were not fully implemented due to a lack of suitable data for monitoring performance and the absence of appropriate enforcement mechanisms. PICT is looking to establish agreed service levels with users (not just departments), but these will probably not be branded as SLAs.</td>
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<tr>
<td>There must be more accurate identification of costs, measurement of benefits, and development and reporting of performance measures.</td>
<td>8.24</td>
<td>Cost control</td>
<td>See 5.20 – this is a priority for PICT.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategic planning for IT should be closely linked with the overall planning of House services, and co-ordinated primarily at Board of Management level</td>
<td>8.24</td>
<td>IT should serve business needs not technical convenience</td>
<td>The Joint Business Systems Board has been created with the prime purpose of ensuring that the business plans of both Houses are reflected in and supported by a viable and affordable business systems and ICT strategy for both Houses.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The House should monitor the implications of technological innovation for its own infrastructure and business processes</td>
<td>8.24</td>
<td>Improved service</td>
<td>This function is now being undertaken by PICT. Newer technologies (e.g. wireless access) are being pursued, but PICT needs to ensure that they have become sufficiently established to be supportable.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PCD should take advantage of opportunities for outsourcing when business cases demonstrate likely benefits</td>
<td>8.24</td>
<td>Reduced costs</td>
<td>A number of services (e.g. the switchboard) are outsourced and PICT is investigating shared service models, particularly for non-customer facing functions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IT recommendations should be taken forward in close consultation with the authorities of the House of Lords</td>
<td>8.25</td>
<td>Cost-effectiveness</td>
<td>With the creation of PICT, IT issues are being conducted on a joint basis.</td>
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<th>RECOMMENDATION</th>
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<tr>
<td>Sharing of services with the House of Lords</td>
<td>10.3</td>
<td>Cost-effectiveness</td>
<td>The recommendations of the joint Internal Audit Review have largely been implemented and a subsequent review of sharing ratios has been undertaken. Arrangements for reporting and planning vary from service to service – many (e.g. Estates and Works) have arrangements for joint governance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communications and culture</td>
<td>11.10</td>
<td>Increasing Members’ understanding of how decisions are made. Increasing Members’ confidence in the House service. Encouraging resolution of issues via officials direct (rather than through the Floor of the House, Whips, Questions)</td>
<td>Further surveys of services were conducted in 2003 and in 2007 (see below). Consideration is to be given as to whether a methodology should be developed to gather views of Members and their staff on a more frequent or continuous basis.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Staff of the House and Members’ staff should be fully consulted in future surveys</td>
<td>11.10 and 12.18</td>
<td>As above</td>
<td>A survey concerning House services was conducted in June and July 2003. Members, their staff and staff of the House were surveyed on a range of issues. The results of the survey, and the action plan, were the subject of a joint meeting between the Board and the Finance and Services Committee in February 2004. A lesson learned from the 2003 survey was that it is difficult to combine effectively a survey of House staff with a survey of Members and their staff. The two groups will often use different services for different purposes, complicating the design and presentation of the questionnaire; and different response rates between different groups can distort the overall results. In 2006 the first survey solely for House staff was conducted. This allowed questions on issues not related to services and facilities (such as management issues) to be included. Another survey of House staff was held in May 2007. The latest survey of Members and their staff took place in March 2007.</td>
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<tr>
<td>There should be a House-wide approach to the provision of information about services, with common standards and presentation</td>
<td>11.14</td>
<td>A corporate approach with standard and common presentation makes it easier for Members to find out what they need</td>
<td>The Services Information Group (SIG), a second tier group under the Board of Management, takes the lead. Its remit is oversee and co-ordinate the provision of consistent, relevant and timely information about House services to Members, Members’ staff and other users of the Parliamentary Estate (other than House staff and the public). The Office of the Clerk has undertaken much work on behalf of the Board in this area: e.g., formulating an agreed information format for publications, and encouraging departments to improve and co-ordinate e-mail alerts. The Internal Communications Manager has recently established a cross-departmental informal communications network made up of those who communicate with Members. The network has agreed to set up a corporate diary of departmental events aimed at Members to prevent clashes. Further work in this area is under way and will be presented to SIG, and if necessary the Board, in 2007.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information should concentrate on how to achieve outcomes rather than simply describe a service. Information and contact numbers for related services should be given and hard copy should be paralleled by intranet availability</td>
<td>11.13 to 11.15</td>
<td>Customer-facing / focused information</td>
<td>There are now common standards for leaflets and publications. Contact numbers are routinely given. SIG’s focus with post-election information is to ensure that information is comprehensible, useful and customer focused. To ensure this, information being produced for the next election is currently being trialled on a number of Members who entered the House at the 2005 General Election. Hard copy material is usually also available on the Intranet.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Questions on information provision should be included in follow-up customer surveys</td>
<td>11.16</td>
<td></td>
<td>The 2003 survey of services included questions on the quality of information provision in 17 areas ranging from procedural rules to arrangements for visitors. Following the 2005 General Election feedback was sought from newly elected Members by SIG via face-to-face interviews rather than a formal survey.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helpdesks should be co-ordinated as far as possible. The long-term aim should be to minimise the number through amalgamation</td>
<td>11.17</td>
<td>Customer satisfaction (One stop shops increasingly the norm)</td>
<td>As part of the creation of PICT a number of IT-related helpdesks have been consolidated into the new Service Desk. There are still separate help desks for IT and Works.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The level of House knowledge among Palace telephone operators needs to be improved. High priority need to be given to briefing and rapid updating of information</td>
<td>11.17</td>
<td>Improved perception of the organisation (with Members as with the public)</td>
<td>There are regular meetings between representatives of switchboard and the information offices of the two Houses to foster consistency of knowledge and information, and improve working practices in the three main telephone bureaux.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Information about the management and direction of House services should be made available in the Whip and on the Intranet. It should include the agenda and conclusions of domestic committees, relevant decisions of the Commission and F&amp;S, and appropriate information from the Board of Management, all in as short a form as possible. Release of information would be at the discretion of the originating body. Contact points for criticisms and suggestions should also be included.</td>
<td>11.21 and 15.14</td>
<td>Improved dissemination of information = increased confidence in the service provided</td>
<td>This recommendation has not been implemented in this format. However, since 2005 the Administration Committee has taken a proactive approach to disseminating information about its activities to Members and others via email and the intranet. Following Braithwaite, the Board circulated a quarterly <em>Corporate Information Digest</em> to members of the Commission, F&amp;S, the Administration Committee and the audit committees. Information about the activities of management groups within the House Service has been provided via the Office of the Clerk’s <em>In Brief</em> service. Both briefings have been revised in 2007.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A ‘mugshot board’ of photographs of senior managers, perhaps linked to organisation charts, might be posted in key places around the House.</td>
<td>11.22</td>
<td>Improved relations between House service and Members</td>
<td>Implemented. A ‘trombinoscope’ has been placed around the Parliamentary Estate, and is available on the Intranet. It encompasses both senior staff and Members involved in the House administration.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Better understanding amongst Departments could be increased by some cross-posting, supplemented by shadowing and mentoring. A ‘foundation period’ for House staff early in their careers should include attachments to other Departments</td>
<td>11.28 and 11.29</td>
<td>Measures which improve staffs’ contribution to the objectives of the House service as a whole</td>
<td>There is now a House-wide induction programme for new staff. Interdepartmental loans of staff take place under the Level Transfer Scheme introduced in 2004 and are monitored by the Board as part of the quarterly performance information they receive. The Board is committed to encouraging staff to pursue more cross-departmental careers and putting in place processes to support this. A temporary Director of HR Projects is now actively taking forward a stronger inter-departmental loan project, which is likely to be implemented in autumn 2007. Aspirations for work shadowing are recorded in Personal Development Plans and take place if possible: e.g., the Internal Review Service offers a member of staff outside their area a chance to shadow their work each year. The Library runs a large number of subject talks, open to all. Rather than hold training events open to all 1,600 staff which would be impractical, effort has been concentrated on ensuring that Departmental Training teams utilise the knowledge of staff in other departments: e.g., DFA recently ran a talk on the work of the Commission by its Secretary.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talks and seminars on aspects of business should be given on a House-wide basis, by people with operational responsibility for the subjects concerned</td>
<td>11.32</td>
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<tr>
<td>Although designed initially for House staff, such talks should be open to Members and their staff (also to complement induction courses)</td>
<td>11.33</td>
<td>Better understanding of the House, its business and what Departments do should enable Members and their staff to use advice and services more effectively</td>
<td>This is not routinely the case. The Scrutiny Unit does run seminars on subjects such as Estimates that are advertised to Members as well as staff.</td>
</tr>
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“Broadly in line”

| “Broadly in line” | 15.79 | The decisive factor should be what is in the best interests of the service of the House | This provision has not been a significant constraint in the period since the Braithwaite Review. |

Implementation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Implementation</th>
<th>15.80</th>
<th>This recommendation was widely viewed as a ‘take it or leave it’ offer, but – according to the implementation manager – was actually intended to indicate that non-implementation of any element might require rebalancing or amendment elsewhere.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The recommendations of this Review should be seen as an integrated package</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Implementation</th>
<th>16.3</th>
<th>An Implementation Manager and an implementation team managed the change process until June 2001, after which responsibility was handed over to the Office of the Clerk.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A change manager should be appointed, to report through the Clerk of the House to the Commission, and lead a group of senior officials of all Departments to implement change</td>
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<tr>
<td>Milestones, regular reporting, and measurement of performance should be elements of the change process</td>
<td>16.2</td>
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<td>The change manager should keep the Board of Management closely informed, and should have the right of access to them</td>
<td>16.3</td>
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<tr>
<td>As a matter of good practice, a review similar to this should take place in about 5 years’ time</td>
<td>16.8</td>
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Annex 6: MP’s generic job description (2001)

In 2001, the Senior Salaries Review Body published a “job description” for a Member of Parliament, which is set out below.

**Job purpose**

Represent, defend and promote national interests and further the needs and interests of constituents wherever possible.

**Principal accountabilities**

1. Help furnish and maintain Government and Opposition so that the business of parliamentary democracy may proceed.

2. Monitor, stimulate and challenge the Executive in order to influence and where possible change government action in ways which are considered desirable.

3. Initiate, seek to amend and review legislation so as to help maintain a continually relevant and appropriate body of law.

4. Establish and maintain a range of contacts throughout the constituency, and proper knowledge of its characteristics, so as to identify and understand issues affecting it and, wherever possible, further the interests of the constituency generally.

5. Provide appropriate assistance to individual constituents, through using knowledge of local and national government agencies and institutions, to progress and where possible help resolve their problems.

6. Contribute to the formulation of party policy to ensure that it reflects views and national needs which are seen to be relevant and important.

7. Promote public understanding of party policies in the constituency, media and elsewhere to facilitate the achievement of party objectives.

**Nature and scope**

An MP’s work may be seen under three broad headings. The first is his or her participation in activities designed to assist in the passage of legislation and hold the Executive to account. This is traditionally seen as the ‘core’ role of the parliamentarian. The second area is work in and for the constituency. This is in part representational; in part promoting or defending the interests of the constituency as a whole; and in part it is designed to help individual constituents in difficulty. The third part of the job is work in support of the party to which the Member belongs, and for which he/she was elected.
Parliamentary work

In the Chamber — An MP spends typically four days each week in the House. It is possible, at least in theory, to spend much of this time in the Chamber itself. But there is little doubt that the majority of Members spend significantly less time there than was typical in the past. This is in part because the Chamber is, generally speaking, perceived to be less significant in influencing affairs than it was 20 or 30 years ago; and also because the time available has been squeezed both by constituency matters and by the amount of work which Members spend in committee or in pursuing their political interests through other channels.

Members appear in the Chamber to speak rather than to listen. It is a forum for making a case but for most of the time has only a marginal effect on major decisions. Nevertheless, it can sometimes be the scene of events of dramatic importance which seize the attention of the electorate. Debates and question time are exacting tests for Ministers and are important in the parliamentary process but there are a number of other ways in which MPs can use the Chamber. For example there are adjournment debates at the end of each day and this provides a useful way of ventilating a constituency grievance, and persuading a Minister to act. Ten Minute Rule Bills are a useful device for generating attention for a particular issue although they are of limited value in getting legislation to the statute book. Twenty Private Members Bills are selected by ballot at the beginning of each session, and these also present to the successful Members an opportunity for pursuing a particular interest. There is, however, little chance of legislative success without government support.

In Committee — In addition to work in the Chamber itself an MP can contribute to the political process through Membership of either Select or Standing Committees. Select Committees, of which the most important is the Public Accounts Committee (PAC), are cross party bodies which can be highly effective in examining specific or general government policies in a relatively bi-partisan manner. Effective work on Select Committees requires background study, planning, devising and putting questions and checking the proceedings for publication. A great deal of reading is involved to do the job properly and it is often necessary to consult various interested parties. The chairmen of Select Committees are appointed by the committees themselves.

By contrast, Standing Committees consider legislation in detail prior to its being sent back to the Chamber. It is up to an MP whether a full contribution is made or not. In general terms, opposition MPs see little chance of major substantial changes to Bills in committee, although sometimes spectacular coups are achieved. The presence of government MPs is required usually just to vote and speaking is often discouraged because it delays proceedings. The Speaker has a list of MPs who act as Chairmen, which he/she compiles with the advice of party whips.

The allocation of MPs to committees is carried out by the Committee of Selection, by permission of the House, save for Select Committees established before 1979, where it is done by the whips. In practice, however, the influence of the whips over appointment to all committees, and particularly to the more important Select Committees, is considerable. Generally, although the work is not mandatory, there is an expectation of MPs being prepared to serve on committees, newer Members serving an apprenticeship through Membership of the less popular ones. The committee clerks provide help and advice on
procedural matters but it takes some time and effort for an MP to accumulate sufficient working knowledge to serve as the real basis for effective committee performance.

There are, in addition to Select and Standing Committees, a number of party and multi-party committees on particular issues. These are of varying importance and effectiveness.

There is no research support available to MPs specifically for committee work, other than the House of Commons Library, although committees as a whole can and do commission specific research.

**Range of Members’ practices**

In practice, some Members, although perhaps only a relatively small minority, seek to influence events by participating to the fullest extent in the Chamber itself.

Others prefer to work through Select Committees or the party backbench committees. But MPs can ‘make their mark’ in the political arena by other means. Many have a specific area of interest or expertise which they bring to the House and through this become seen by all parties as respected experts in some specific area. They are often able to reinforce his role through the media. Others — particularly the longer serving and more experienced — play an important role in reinforcing their party’s activities, for example during particularly difficult debates Some, usually because of their specific expertise can help in the execution of government policy, formally or informally. Yet others champion specific causes inside and outside the House. All MPs are subject to pressure from lobby groups. Some however work closely with bodies such as charities or trade associations to promote their interests.

By using one or more of the means available, it is generally held that the majority of MPs make an identifiable contribution to the national political process. This role is however largely tailored to their own needs, capabilities and ambitions.

Work in the constituency — There is broad agreement that this aspect of MPs’ work has increased immensely over the last 20 years. MPs visit their constituency about weekly and indeed many live there. Constituency work can be divided into two parts, the general and the particular.

General work— In general, MPs must maintain contact with a wide range of local bodies, both official and voluntary, to feel the pulse of issues affecting the constituency overall. This involves such activities as keeping in touch with the local authority and local councillors, giving talks to local societies and schools, visiting factories, and participating in civic events. Through this work Members can identify how national policies or issues impact on their own constituencies so that they can if appropriate contribute to debate on them. In at least some constituencies the MP is also seen as a quasi Civic Leader, alongside leading Councillors and other dignitaries.

*Senior Salaries Review Body, Cm 4997–II, (2001).*

Introduction

1. The House of Commons is the representative institution of the British people. It is here that our laws are made and it is from its Members that governments are formed. The sovereignty of Parliament is the fundamental expression of the sovereignty of the people. It is the apex of our democratic system. As such, it is very much a working place and at any time there are many thousands of passholders, in addition to 659 MPs and around 700 Peers. It is the purpose of this Report to make recommendations which will better reconcile the necessary purpose of Parliament with the reasonable expectation of the people to have access to the processes by which we govern ourselves.

2. It serves no-one if we make it difficult for voters to understand what their elected representatives are doing. Too often the impression is given that the House of Commons is a private club, run for the benefit of its Members, where members of the public are tolerated only on sufferance. It is beyond the influence of the House of Commons, let alone this Committee, to arrest international trends of declining participation and trust. However, the Commons can make itself more accessible to those outside, both as interested visitors and as citizens wishing to be more involved in proceedings, it can do more to make it easier for people to understand the work of Parliament, and it can do more to communicate its activity to the world outside.

The Citizenship Curriculum

3. We recommend that Ministers in the Department for Education and Skills re-examine the balance of the citizenship curriculum because, while we recognise that the other matters covered by the curriculum such as the balance of rights and responsibilities and community involvement are crucial aspects of citizenship education, an understanding of the country’s democratic institutions is also of fundamental importance to today’s young people, and to the engaged voters of tomorrow.

Educational resources at Westminster

4. We recommend that the House consider the provision of dedicated educational facilities for the use of the Education Unit, including a teaching area, as the National Assembly for Wales does.

5. We recommend that the Education Unit be given precedence in the Macmillan Room when the House is sitting in September.

6. We also think it would be desirable for the Central Tours Office to offer, in addition to its current tours, a Parliament-in-action Tour which would help visitors to understand
how Parliament works and give them a brief taste of select committees, standing committees, adjournment debates and Westminster Hall as well as the Chamber.

**Outreach work with schools and colleges**

7. Outreach work is the core of the Education Unit's work, and rightly so. The vast majority of young people will not have the opportunity to participate in a school visit to Parliament, and Parliament's educational activities must therefore be tailored to those who wish to learn about Parliament in the classroom. To supplement existing resources such as the website, outreach facilities such as a Parliamentary roadshow could have the potential to reach many more young people than currently are able to visit Parliament. We recommend that before any further consideration is given to establishing an educational roadshow, the House should examine the scope for a Parliamentary partnering scheme with, for example, local authorities. Parliament's contribution to the teaching of political literacy could be delivered to people in their own communities (in schools, libraries and council premises) by way of joint enterprise.

8. The Education Unit already does a great deal of work building links with individual teachers, schools and colleges. We recommend that it should do more to publicise its work to Members, and to build links with local education authorities.

**Use of the Chamber**

9. We believe there is a case for reconsideration of the long-standing convention that only elected Members of Parliament may ever sit in the Chamber, which is in contrast to the practice of many other legislatures.

**New Voters**

10. We recommend that the House devise a new voter's guide to be sent to all young people around the time of their eighteenth birthday.

**The Internet**

11. We are convinced of the need for a radical upgrading of the website at an early opportunity, which will require significant investment in systems and staff. The financial implications of this are for the Finance and Services Committee and the House of Commons Commission to consider.

12. We recommend that the Broadcasting Committee keep under review the possibilities offered by the digital broadcasting of Parliament.

**On-line consultations**

13. We believe that the greater use of on-line consultation is a good way for Parliament to take account of the views of the wider public.

14. There have now been several experiments with on-line consultation on an ad hoc basis, both by select committees and by all-party groups. They have generally been successful and
have proved effective as a way of engaging members of the public in the work that we do and of giving a voice to those who would otherwise be excluded. We urge select committees and joint committees considering draft legislation to make on-line consultation a more regular aspect of their work.

**A Commons newsletter**

15. We recommend that the House make available to those interested in receiving the information (by post, e-mail or other convenient method of communication) a weekly newsletter. Aimed at the general, non-specialist reader, it should summarise the business of the previous week and set out forthcoming business for the following week. In due course, it may be possible to extend this service to allow for communication of other information by e-mail (such as the daily list of papers available in the Vote Office) and regular, subject-based updates for which users could subscribe. A printed form of the newsletter should be made available to visitors at various points around the Parliamentary Estate, including the bookshop. Electronically, it should occupy a prominent position on or near the front page of the Parliamentary website.

**Information for young people**

16. We recommend that, as development of the website progresses, the House authorities, in consultation with young people, develop the website in a form which is more accessible to them.

**Visitors to the Parliamentary Estate**

17. To the extent that there is conflict between the needs of different groups of visitors, we believe that the House should, as a matter of principle, give priority to the needs of those who come to see and participate in the work of Parliament over those whose primary interest is the Palace of Westminster as a historical building.

**A visitor centre**

18. We welcome the work of the Administration and Accommodation and Works Committees and the House’s endorsement of the proposals for the construction of the reception and security building.

19. We recognise the several unique difficulties involved in establishing new visitor facilities near the Palace of Westminster, but urge that all possible options are explored.

20. Our starting point is that any Visitor Centre project should have four main objectives:

a) it must provide a welcome to visitors;

b) it must provide an interesting and friendly environment;

c) it should make Parliament more accessible, allowing visitors to see at least something of what Parliament is and does without necessarily having to visit the galleries, committees or take a tour; and
d) it must improve public understanding and knowledge of the work and role of Parliament.

The new reception and security building will help to meet the first of these objectives; it will use visitor staff so that visitors’ first contact with staff of the House will come from someone whose primary concern is to greet them and make them feel welcome. A major review of signage, currently under way, should also help to make the environment more welcoming. There may also be scope to improve the current facilities designed to meet the other three objectives but in our view the need for a dedicated Visitor Centre remains. Once the overdue improvement to Parliament’s welcome and access has been addressed, attention can focus on meeting the other three main objectives of the Visitor Centre Project through planning for a dedicated Visitor Centre.

21. Participants in the Hansard Society’s Connecting Communities with Parliament programme suggested a number of ways in which visitors’ experience of the Parliamentary Estate could be improved for a very modest cost. The main proposals were:

a) More staff on-hand specifically to welcome visitors, tell them what they could see and point them in the right direction, handing them a written guide, perhaps including a plan and an indication of what visitors were able to do.

b) A sign at the entrance saying ‘Welcome to the Houses of Parliament’.

c) Better signage in general, indicating such things as toilets, the Jubilee Café, the Grand Committee Room, Committee Corridor, etc.

d) Improved queuing systems for the Gallery.

e) The possibility of a ‘viewing gallery’ which would allow visitors to pass along the corridor at the back of the Gallery, seeing the House while it is sitting but not stopping to listen to the debate.

We welcome these practical suggestions and we commend them to the House authorities.

‘Strangers’

22. We recommend that the term ‘Strangers’ be no longer used in referring to visitors to the House of Commons.

Access to the Gallery when the House is sitting

23. We recommend that further consideration be given to ways in which groups of visitors touring the building might be able to pass through the gallery as part of a tour so that they are able to witness aspects of Parliament in action.

Saturday opening

24. We recommend that the Administration Committee consider Saturday opening of the Line of Route—for Members’ parties as well as paying groups—to assess its feasibility.
25. We further recommend that the Administration Committee consider the feasibility of allowing Members to book guided tours of the Line of Route throughout the Summer opening on a similar basis to that on which they can book tours on sitting days.

**Standing committees**

26. We recommend that the Procedure Committee consider how better to present the information from the bill, explanatory notes, amendment paper and selection list, either on paper or electronically, so that when an amendment is being debated Members and visitors can see the original clause, the clause as amended, and an explanatory note on both, so that the issue under debate is clear to all.

27. We recommend that a guide for visitors to standing committees on bills should also be produced.

**Public petitions**

28. We believe that there is a case for the House to do more with public petitions which, if handled correctly, represent a potentially significant avenue for communication between the public and Parliament.

29. We recommend that the Liaison Committee and Procedure Committee consider a process whereby public petitions should automatically stand referred to the relevant select committee. It would then be for the committee to decide whether or not to conduct an inquiry into the issues raised, or to take them into account in the context of a current or forthcoming inquiry.

**Rules governing the submission of petitions**

30. We recommend that the House accept petitions in both typescript and manuscript, although the present restriction against interlineations, deletions and insertions should be retained so that it is clear that the wording of the petition has not been changed without the petitioner’s knowledge. The top sheet—the authoritative copy of the petition—should continue to be distinguished from sheets of additional signatures by the Member presenting it signing in the top right-hand corner, as is the current practice.

**The House of Commons and the media**

31. We welcome the progress that has been made in recent years to improve the House’s communications strategy, in particular the establishment of the posts of Communications Adviser and Media Adviser and the Select Committee Media Officers. The Group on Information for the Public has likewise played a vital role. But we believe that there is scope for greater co-ordination of the House’s media and communications resources. We therefore recommend the establishment of a central press office for the House of Commons, to take a more proactive role in promoting the House and its work.

32. We recommend that the Board of Management and the House of Commons Commission urgently consider whether there is scope for further improving the co-ordination of the House’s media, educational and communications resources and
planning, with effective Member oversight and close liaison with appropriate officials and Members of the House of Lords.

**Promoting Hansard**

33. We recommend that the Department of the Official Report aim to produce a simple index to the daily part of Hansard once the necessary technological changes have been seen through.

34. We recommend that the Hansard report of a debate should be posted on the internet at the same time as it is sent to the printer, to be replaced with the published version the following day.

**The Press Gallery**

35. Consideration should be given to allowing journalists to bring laptop computers into the Press Gallery.

*Select Committee on Modernisation of the House of Commons, First Report of Session 2003-04 (HC 368), pages 3 to 8, Conclusions and recommendations.*
Annex 8: Resolution on Connecting Parliament with the Public (26/01/2005)

Motion made, and Question put forthwith, pursuant to Order [24 January],

That this House notes with approval the First Report of the Select Committee on Modernisation of the House of Commons of Session 2003–04, on Connecting Parliament with the Public (HC 368) and the First Special Report from the Committee containing the House of Commons Commission’s response thereto (HC 69); agrees that the House should make itself more accessible, make it easier for people to understand the work of Parliament and do more to communicate its activity to the general public; welcomes the steps taken or planned as set out in the Commission’s response, including those planned to bring about the radical upgrade of the website envisaged by the Modernisation Committee; endorses the Committee’s conclusion that further consideration should be given to facilities such as a Parliamentary roadshow in the light of evaluation of other outreach initiatives; authorises the House of Commons Commission to fund the publication and distribution of a new voters’ guide; and would welcome more proactive promotion to the media and the public of the House and its work.—[Mr. Hain.]

The House divided: Ayes 375, Noes 14.

Performance management in the Ministry of Defence (MoD) continues to be based on the Balanced Scorecard approach. The Defence Balanced Scorecard sets out the Department’s top level strategic objectives, including our PSA targets. It enables the Defence Management Board (DMB) to monitor performance, both current and forecast, in pursuit of these objectives. The scorecard approach has formed the basis of performance management in MoD for around five years. During this time, it has evolved into a highly sophisticated and well-regarded management tool, providing the DMB with an extremely reliable insight into the Department’s ability to achieve the Defence Vision.

The Balanced Scorecard is based on a management theory expounded by Professor Robert Kaplan and Dr David Norton of the Harvard Business School. Following detailed studies, they argued that a characteristic of failing organisations is a tendency to focus too much management attention on a narrowly confined set of objectives, most commonly associated with maximising short-term financial gain. By contrast successful organisations concentrate their attention across a balanced range of key strategic activities thereby safeguarding their long-term health. Kaplan and Norton’s Balanced Scorecard approach provides a systematic framework in which to achieve this. It encourages management boards to view their business from a number of different perspectives which, when allied to a systematic performance reporting process, ensures that boards can keep track of how well the organisation is translating its high-level strategy into action.

The original Kaplan and Norton scorecard was devised with the needs of private sector organisations in mind. As a public sector organisation, we have adapted their model so that it better serves our own requirements. The Defence Balanced Scorecard has the four perspectives of Purpose, Resources, Enabling Processes and Future Capabilities as shown in the figure below.

There are four key strategic objectives in each perspective. Looked at collectively they cover the whole of the MoD’s principal areas of business. Performance against each of the objectives is assessed on a quarterly basis. To allow this process to operate to best effect, targets setting out required levels of performance primarily over the coming four years, are agreed with those in the Department who are responsible for achieving the objectives. A series of detailed performance indicators and metrics, the means by which we measure performance, is also agreed. The performance indicators we use are a mixture of lag indicators (which inform the Board about actual achievements) and lead Indicators (where the focus is on assessing the effectiveness of current progress). The metrics we use are tailored to provide the best available information about performance levels. In some cases, this means drawing on factual and statistical data, for others it may mean using written assessments, either provided by objective sources or subjected to lower level scrutiny and audit. Agreeing the objectives, targets, performance indicators and metrics is the subject of an annual exercise, conducted prior to the publication of the Departmental Plan.

The DMB receives a detailed performance report four times a year. The report uses a four colour traffic light coding system to illustrate which objectives are on track and where weaknesses of varying significance lie. In general, the report will include an assessment of actual performance from the previous and current quarter and a forecast of performance against planned activity over the coming three to four years. High level strategic analysis of the issues underpinning the performance assessments also features in the report, together with an assessment of the key risks that could jeopardise the achievement of objectives. The information they receive is used to inform board discussion and decision — it may, for example, lead to adjustments in strategic direction and priorities, or the reallocation of resources. And as the Department’s performance against PSA
targets is assessed in the Defence Balanced Scorecard, the data collected is also used to inform reports to Parliament, No. 10, HM Treasury and the Cabinet Office.

Our performance management approach has been subject to thorough review over the last three years, first in 2002 by the Department’s internal auditors and then in 2003-04 by the NAO, who conducted an external review of our PSA reporting arrangements. Both reviews provided favourable assurance. During 2004-05, the NAO conducted a further review, this time looking specifically at our systems for assessing and reporting military readiness. They concluded that the Department has a good system for reporting readiness levels that is continuously improving. They also noted that recent operations have largely validated the accuracy of the readiness reporting system.

Our performance reporting approach continues to attract interest from wider audiences, including other Government Departments, local authorities and international Defence Departments. MoD performance management experts are regularly invited to address performance management events. And the work we have been conducting to explore the potential for selling our performance management tool into the wider commercial market is now at an advanced stage.

**Balanced Scorecard**

**2005 Defence Balanced Scorecard**

*Are we fit for today’s challenges and ready for tomorrow’s tasks?*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Purpose</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A Current Operations: To succeed in operations and Military Tasks today.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B Future Operations: Be ready for the tasks of tomorrow.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C Policy: Work with Allies, other governments and multilateral institutions to provide a security framework that matches new threats and instabilities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D Wider Government: Contribute to the Government’s wider domestic reform agenda, and achieve our PSA and PPA targets.</td>
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*Are we using our resources to best effect?*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Resources</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>E Finance: Maximise our outputs within allocated financial resources.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F Manpower: Ensure we have the people we need.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G Estate: Maintain an estate of the right size and quality, managed in a sustainable manner, to achieve defence objectives.</td>
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<tr>
<td>H Reputation: Enhance our reputation amongst our own people and externally.</td>
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*Are we high performing organisation?*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Enabling Processes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I Personnel Management: Manage and invest in our people to give of their best.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J Health &amp; Safety: A safe environment for our staff, contractors and visitors.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K Logistics: Support and sustain our Armed Forces.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L Business Management: Deliver improved ways of working.</td>
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</table>

*Are we building for future success?*

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<tr>
<th>Future Capabilities</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>M Future Effects: More flexible Armed Forces to deliver greater effect.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N Efficiency and Change: More flexible and efficient organisations and processes to support the Armed Forces.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O Future Capabilities and Infrastructure: Progress future equipment and capital infrastructure projects to time, quality and cost estimates.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P Future Personnel Plans: Develop the skills and professional expertise we need for tomorrow.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q Science, Innovation and Technology: Exploit new technologies.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Taken from Annex D to the Ministry of Defence Annual Report and Accounts 2004-05, HC 464.
Annex 10: List of people seen during the review

**Committees**

House of Commons Commission  
Finance and Services Committee  
Administration Committee

**Individual Members**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rt Hon Bob Ainsworth MP</th>
<th>Rt Hon Geoff Hoon MP</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Janet Anderson MP</td>
<td>Helen Jones MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sir Stuart Bell MP</td>
<td>Mr Kevan Jones MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr Simon Burns MP</td>
<td>Tony Lloyd MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mr Christopher Chope MP</td>
<td>Sir Michael Lord MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Derek Conway MP</td>
<td>Peter Luff MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sir Patrick Cormack MP</td>
<td>Rt Hon David Maclean MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rt Hon Frank Dobson MP</td>
<td>Rt Hon Patrick McLoughlin MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Brian H Donohoe MP</td>
<td>Rt Hon Theresa May MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mr Frank Doran MP</td>
<td>Mr Andrew Robathan MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs Gwyneth Dunwoody MP</td>
<td>Mr Barry Sheerman MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rt Hon Frank Field MP</td>
<td>John Spellar MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rt Hon Bruce George MP</td>
<td>Rt Hon Jack Straw MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr Neil Gerrard MP</td>
<td>Ms Gisela Stuart MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Helen Goodman MP</td>
<td>John Thurso MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nick Harvey MP</td>
<td>Mr Andrew Tyrie MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rt Hon Sir Alan Haselhurst MP</td>
<td>Sir Nicholas Winterton MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sylvia Heal MP</td>
<td>Rt Hon Sir George Young MP</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sir Kevin Tebbit also accepted invitations to appear before the 1922 Executive on 13 December 2006 and before the 1922 Committee on 21 February 2007.
Groups of staff

Association of House of Commons Clerks
Business Planning Group
Clerk’s Advisory Group
Department of Finance and Administration Departmental Management Board
Group on Information for the Public
HAIS Strategy Group
Human Resources Group
Library Directors and Business Manager
Official Report Executive Management Board
Parliamentary Visitor and Information Centre Board
PICT Board
Senior Management Development Programme (2006-07 cohort)
Serjeant at Arms Management Team
Trade Union Side

External advisers

Charlotte Cornish
Mike Grant
Cath Hardaker
Claire Howard
Sir Robin Ibbs
Catherine Karney
Sir Thomas Legg
Rob Prideaux (NAO)
Mike Thomas
Sir John Hessell Tiltman
David Taylor

House of Commons Service individual staff

Terry Bird
Heather Bryson
John Collins
Philip Collins
Susan Craig
Marianne Cwynarski
Tracey Garratty
Peter Grant Peterkin
Sue Harrison
Elizabeth Honer
Helen Irwin
Malcolm Jack
Tim Jarrett
Andrew Kennon
Barbara Long
Patricia Macaulay-Fraser
Peter Mason
Paul Monaghan
Muir Morton
David Natzler
Liz Parratt
Sheila Paterson  James Robertson  Kevin Treeby
Jill Pay        Robert Rogers  Bob Twigger
Libby Preston   Richard Russell Johan van der Broek
John Pullinger  John Sellars  Andrew Walker
James Rhys      Angus Sinclair
Chris Ridley    Lorraine Sutherland

_House of Lords_

The Lord Speaker
David Beamish   Paul Hayter  Philippa Tudor
Stephen Ellison Tim Lamming  Rhodri Walters
Liz Hallam-Smith Ed Ollard  Sir Michael Willcocks

_Other Parliaments_

Anders Forsberg, Sweden
David McGee, New Zealand
Audrey O’Brien, Canada

_Hansard Society_

Clare Ettinghausen
Lord Puttnam
Gemma Rosenblatt

_Written contributions_

Mr Geoffrey Clifton-Brown MP
Barry Winetrobe

Note: As stated by Sir Kevin Tebbit in the preface to this report, public disclosure of the notes of these conversations would in our judgement be likely to inhibit the free and frank exchange of views and would be likely to prejudice the effective conduct of public affairs.