

HOUSE COMMITTEE**MINUTES****18 November 2014**

Present:

L. Campbell-Savours
L. Cope of Berkeley
B. D'Souza (Chairman)
L. Laming
B. Royall of Blaisdon
L. Sewel
L. Stirrup
B. Stowell of Beeston
L. True
L. Wallace of Tankerness
B. Walmsley

L. Turnbull (Chairman of the Audit Committee)

together with the Clerk of the Parliaments.

Apologies had been received from Baroness McDonagh.

1. MINUTES OF THE 3rd & 4th MEETINGS OF THE 2014-15 SESSION

The Committee *agreed* the minutes of the meetings.

2. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF THE 4th MEETING

There were no matters arising.

3. FURTHER STEPS TOWARDS THE FINANCIAL PLAN

The Finance Director presented his memorandum (H/14-15/17). He drew the Committee's attention to the proposed resource budget for 2015/16, some of the major programmes being undertaken including Printing & Publishing and the refurbishment of 5 Great College Street. He also noted the "resourcing for change" portfolio of items across departments, funded from savings and a small amount of new money, to support change programmes, compliance, one-off parliamentary events and growth in business as usual. In addition, he highlighted the budget outturn for the current financial year, for which underspends of 1.1% for resource and 20% for capital were currently predicted, and the measures in place to reduce capital underspends in future years.

The Committee welcomed the paper and thanked staff involved in its production. Committee members expressed support for the opportunity to consider the financial plan earlier in the planning cycle, for the forecast resource underspend and the focus on

improving capital forecasts. Members agreed that pressure on public finances would continue into the next Parliament and the focus on reducing spending, which had brought a 15% real terms budget cut since 2010/11, should continue. It was clear that work had already been done to assess proposals for necessity and value for money, but nonetheless all additional spending should only be proposed when it could not be met from existing budgets. The Committee was reassured that there was no culture of spending up to the budget ceiling.

The Committee *agreed* that the funding for each bid in the “resourcing for change” portfolio should be ring-fenced until any requirement for new staff had been assessed by the Staff Adviser and the business need for it approved by the Clerk of the Parliaments.

Some Committee members expressed concern about PICT’s ability to meet its performance targets under its existing budget. Hope was expressed that the creation of the Parliamentary Digital Service would improve this. The Clerk of the Parliaments agreed to discuss this with the Acting Clerk of the House of Commons and report back to the Committee, and as member-level oversight of PICT’s efficiency and performance was undertaken by the Information Committee the Chairman agreed to pass on concerns to that committee.

The Committee received assurance regarding cost control mechanisms for the 5 Great College Street programme, the detail of which was being considered by the Administration and Works Committee.

The Committee *agreed* that funding for a share of the running costs of the Intelligence and Security Committee could be removed from the budget.

The Finance Director agreed to return to the Committee in December with the final financial plan, further information about the budget for staff pay, assurances relating to savings arising from the printing and publishing programme, further information on the budget profile for the Archives accommodation programme, and information regarding the contribution to PICT’s budget.

4. JENKINS REPORT ON SECURITY GOVERNANCE

The Clerk of the Parliaments presented his memorandum (H/14-15/18) and referred the Committee to the report he had commissioned from Sir Paul Jenkins, *The Governance of Security for Parliament* (H/14-15/19).

The Committee *agreed* recommendations one and three of the Jenkins Report, relating to responsibility for security, and that an implementation team should be established to take them forward. The proposals for implementation would be brought back to the House Committee in due course.

The Committee did not support recommendation two, relating to the role of Members in the governance of Parliamentary security, but *agreed* that the implementation team should further consider this issue and include this in their proposals.

5. SECURITY ARRANGEMENTS RENEWAL PROGRAMME: UPDATE

The Parliamentary Security Director presented his Memorandum (H/14-15/20) with Myfanwy Barrett, House of Commons Director of Finance.

The Committee *approved* the recommended option, to bring in-house the entire security officer work force; and *agreed* to a contract extension to enable a smooth transition; and *agreed* that updates should be provided, in due course, on implementation.

6. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The Clerk of the Parliaments informed the Committee that an offer would be made to the unions to match the recent increase in the London Living Wage for staff of the House with effect from 1 December.

The Clerk of the Parliaments reported that the cost of the Independent Options Appraisal (IOA) for Restoration & Renewal had not increased. However, under the terms of the contract for the IOA, additional work had been commissioned to take place in 2015/16 better to inform the eventual decision on the options appraisal. This was work which would otherwise need to take place after the decision was made, and an allowance of £5million had been made for this in the two Houses' budgets for 2015/16.

November 2014
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