

**Minutes of the Management Board meeting
held on Thursday 15 January 2015 at 11.00am**

Those present: Dame Janet Gaymer DBE (non-executive member) (Chair)
Myfanwy Barrett (Director of Finance)
John Borley CB (Director General of Facilities)
David Natzler (Acting Clerk of the House)
Andrew Walker (Director General of HR and Change)
Barbara Scott (non-executive member)

In attendance: Tom Goldsmith (Board Secretary)
Ben Williams (Assistant Secretary)
John Benger (Acting Head, Department of Information Services)
Jacqy Sharpe (Acting Director General of Chamber and Committee Services)
Matthew Taylor (Acting Head, PICT)
Eve Samson (Clerk, Standards Committee) (item 3 only)
Mal McDougall (Head, Safety Management) (item 4 only)
Martin Trott (Head, Continuous Improvement in Parliament) (item 5 only)
Anne Foster (Head, Diversity and Inclusion) (item 6 only)
Bob Twigger (Commission Secretary) (item 7 only)

1. Actions arising

- 1.1 Action 3: Departments had provided the OCE with information about their current benchmarking activities. A paper would be provided for the Board's March meeting mapping current activities and suggesting areas where further work could be done.
- 1.2 Action 4: The full equality analysis was being conducted on the introduction of name badges for all House staff.
- 1.3 Action 5: A Q&A document for staff was being prepared and would focus on specific questions that staff had raised with the pay and reward team. The Chair reported that she had received an e-mail from the TUS President raising concerns about the implementation of the policy and it was agreed that David Natzler would meet Ken Gall to discuss the unions' concerns.

2. Oral updates

- 2.1 **David Natzler** updated the Board on the implementation of the Security Governance Review (Jenkins Report) and reported that the SARP had taken on responsibility for planning for the workforce transfer. **Myfanwy Barrett** noted that half of the contingency for the next financial year would be needed for SARP and security governance implementation. A proposal for the new security structure should be prepared by the end of the month and would then be taken to the Commission and House Committee for approval. **Andrew Walker** commented that once the structure for the new set-up had been approved SARP and Jenkins would need to be progressed together.
- 2.2 **John Borley** reported that the Finance and Services Committee had discussed the interaction between the Northern Estate Accommodation Programme and the Restoration and Renewal Programme. **Myfanwy Barrett** reported that the Finance and Services Committee agreed its advice on the Supplementary Estimate to the Commission. The Committee had also discussed using the current legislative opportunity provided by the Governance Review to merge the Administration and Members Estimates. The Board would receive a paper on this proposal in March.
- 2.3 **John Bengler** reported that staff feedback on the Respect Policy training had been overwhelmingly positive. **John Borley** stressed the importance in staff having confidence that senior managers would support them if they raised a case under the policy.
- 2.4 **Andrew Walker** reported that the NSPCC had been commissioned to produce a report on the House Service's safeguarding needs which should be provided in draft by April.

Progress was being made on providing visitors to the Estates with instructions on what to do in case of an emergency; the current proposal was to print this information on the back of temporary visitor passes.

- 2.5 **Jacqy Sharpe** reported that there was currently no disabled access to 14 Tothill Street and requested that action was taken to address this situation as soon as possible.

3. Continuing Professional Development for Members

3.1 **Eve Samson** introduced her paper. This project had evolved from a Committee Office project to provide Members with training on questioning skills to support their participation in select committees. One of the key challenges was communicating the offer to Members. The Members' landing page on the intranet now linked directly to a portal which contained the Continuing Professional Development (CPD) opportunities on offer. It was also important that Member-facing staff knew what was available so that they could direct Members towards it.

3.2 The Board considered the paper. In discussion the following points were made:

- The current offer was closer to a menu of training programmes rather than a CPD programme as there was no requirement to complete a certain number of hours a year to become accredited.
- The option for Members' staff training courses leading to, or contributing to, a formal qualification, such as an NVQ, was being considered.
- There was currently a gap in the provision of ICT training for Members and their staff following the end of the Capita Learning & Development contract. The current proposal was not to provide basic ICT training but there were proposals to provide support with social media management. **Andrew Walker** and **Matthew Taylor** agreed to discuss the Capita contract replacement outside the meeting.
- There might be merit in providing tailored training to Members involved in House governance activities, for example Members of the Finance and Services Committee might benefit from briefings on capital forecasting and procurement procedures.
- One page summaries on a range of policy issues were being produced; these would signpost Members to sources of additional information if they wanted to find out more.
- There was limited capacity to engage with individual Committee Clerks about training for their new Committee Members; additional resources would be needed to make progress in this area. The devolved parliaments and assemblies in the UK programmes dedicated more resource to Member CPD than the House; for example the Welsh Assembly had three dedicated officials working on this area.
- A cohort of Members would be attending training events at the Institute for Government and the European Institutions.

- Election buddies would also be used to direct Members towards CPD events that they would find most helpful.
- Some events would be open to Members and Members' staff but it was important for some events to be Members only, as this might encourage greater sharing of experience between Members.
- Some Peers and members of House of Lords staff would be delivering subject talks as part of the induction programme. The House of Lords Administration was also involved in the procurement of training as some would be offered to their Members.
- Options would be considered for how to include ethics training as part of the CPD offering. It would be important to co-ordinate with the training provided by the political parties in this area.

4. Safety Management

- 4.1 **Marianne McDougall** introduced her paper. The action plan had been developed in response to a Deloitte's audit of Safety Management. The audit had been helpful in creating a set of common goals to work towards. The Board was being asked to help address the cultural issues raised by the report.
- 4.2 The **Chair** noted this subject was on the agenda following concerns raised by the Audit Committees whose view was that the issues raised by the report were sufficiently serious that they needed to be considered by the Board.
- 4.3 The Board considered the paper. In discussion the following points were made:
- As established in the Combined Health and Safety Policy Parliamentary Estates are planning to introduce a contract host role to support the contract owners by engaging with contractors to ensure that safety requirements were being met. This would fulfil our responsibilities under the revised CDM regulations.
 - There was currently no group responsible for managing security risks and delivering safety improvements across the Estate. The Parliamentary Safety Assurance Committee was responsible for providing assurance but did not manage these risks, although its remit might be expanded to cover this role.
 - The key challenge was getting managers to accept that they owned and were responsible for the safety risks in their business areas.
- 4.4 The **Chair** summarised the discussion. The Board was keen to ensure that progress was made on addressing the issues raised by the report and would therefore take an update paper in April to ensure that the action plan's implementation was proceeding as indicated.

5. Continuous Improvement

- 5.1 **Martin Trott** introduced his paper. The two Boards had agreed to introduce a continuous improvement programme just over a year ago. There had been some concerns that continuous improvement might be seen as a new version of the savings programme and therefore a conscious decision was made to build the process from the bottom up and get staff involved through becoming continuous improvement advocates and practitioners. This approach had been successful; however, a more formalised approach, including having departments commit to continuous improvement activity in their business plans, was now being requested. **Myfanwy Barrett** said that the Board could not support both a low key approach to continuous improvement and require substantial benefits and savings.
- 5.2 **Martin Trott** reported on the issues that had been discussed when the House of Lords Board had considered this issue.
- 5.3 The Board considered the paper. In discussion the following points were made:
- There needed to be greater co-ordination between continuous improvement and internal audit as internal audit were sometimes being asked to review areas that might be considered by a continuous improvement practitioner.
 - There was a need for visible support for this programme from the Board. Some continuous improvement practitioners had reported resistance from senior managers in departments with taking forward continuous improvement activity as they were unsure whether it had senior level support.
 - The Business Management Group had considered this proposal and some business management directors already had proposals for continuous improvement reviews in their areas to include in business plans. Inclusion in business plans would be a catalyst for embedding CI in departments.
 - There was a need for communication about what had already been achieved by continuous improvement and what the next steps were. Such communication should be based on concrete examples of previous achievements.
 - The House Service had previously run a suggestions scheme but it had not been particularly productive.

- There needed to be an increased emphasis on reviews that cut across departmental boundaries; it might be worth considering establishing a small “innovation fund” to incentivise such activity.
- The equality analysis currently said that there would be no equality impact arising from continuous improvement activity. Ideally this activity should have a positive impact rather than no impact at all.

5.4 The **Chair** summarised the discussion. The Board agreed to the actions set out in the paper and agreed that there should be an increased emphasis on continuous improvement advocates and practitioners being able to suggest possible reviews in business areas other than their own.

6. Diversity & Inclusion

6.1 **David Natzler** said that he had requested this item be placed on the agenda to allow the Board to consider what the next steps were following its meeting with the Workplace Equality Networks (WENs).

6.2 **Andrew Walker** reported that the WENs had recently held a meeting with Mr Speaker. A review of the progress made by through Diversity and Inclusion Scheme over the last three years was currently being conducted by external assessors. This would be shared with the Board and the Commission and help inform the Diversity and Inclusion policy for the new Parliament.

6.3 **Anne Foster** reported on that the WENs had recently discussed induction arrangements for new Members and were keen to be represented at the New Members’ Reception Area. They also thought it was important to ensure that all election buddies had undertaken diversity and inclusion training. The WENs were also keen for the House to explore further benchmarking activities. The results for the latest Stonewall survey had been received and the House Service had improved its position again moving from 155th to 126th place.

6.4 The Board considered diversity and inclusion issues. In discussion the following points were made:

- The Board would be happy to support the WENs role model programme and would require more information about the scheme at a later point.
- The Board was open to proposals for additional benchmarking activities and could consider this in March as part of its broader discussion about benchmarking.

- Board Members agreed to include a diversity and inclusion objective in their forward job plans and to having the WENs involved in its evaluation.
- On Member induction, the Chamber briefing would contain material on diversity and inclusion and the Board supported the proposal that all election buddies should have undertaken diversity and inclusion training. The aim was to try to minimise the amount of information new Members were given when they first arrived at the House so the Reception Area would probably not be the most effective way for the WENs to reach new Members. Other methods, including using the election buddies to deliver messages would be considered.
- A key way to improve diversity in the service would be through the recruitment process. The Board needed proper data on the current processes to identify at what stages BME candidates were falling out of the competition and then design measures to address the problems identified. This issues would be covered in the external review of the Diversity and Inclusion plan that was currently underway.
- The proposed Equalities Committee was referred to at the last Commission meeting on the future year's budget and plans were in place for how such a Committee could be funded if it were created. However it was important that staff were not seen as having access to a privileged method of establishing a select committee that was not open to others, including Members.
- The Board was supportive in principle of a development programme targeted at staff from under-represented groups, subject to the results of the review of the D&I plan.
- The consultants reviewing the current Diversity and Inclusion Scheme would be asked to provide advice on the suggestion that targets for BME staff be extended to A2 and A1 bands.

7. House of Commons Governance Committee

7.1 The Board considered the report of the House of Commons Governance Committee. In discussion the following points were raised.

- The Board noted the comments made by the shadow Leader of the House emphasising the importance of rapid implementation of the report's recommendations. It would be important to ensure there were no unnecessary delays, although some strands of work could not be started until the new Commission had been established after the election.
- The Board noted the importance of the House being able to establish the new Commission quickly.
- The next senior leadership event would be asked to consider the issues the report raised about a unified House Service.

8. AOB

8.1 The Board noted the paper on General Election Planning and was content with the proposals about decision making.