

**Minutes of the Management Board meeting
held on Thursday 12 September 2013 at 3.30 pm**

Those present: Sir Robert Rogers KCB (Clerk and Chief Executive) (Chair)
Myfanwy Barrett (Director of Finance)
John Borley CB (Director General of Facilities)
Joan Miller (Director of PICT, external member)
David Natzler (Clerk Assistant and Director General of
Chamber and Committee Services)
John Pullinger (Director General of Information Services)
Andrew Walker (Director General of HR and Change)
Alex Jablonowski (non-executive member)
Barbara Scott (non-executive member)

In attendance: Matthew Hamlyn (Board Secretary)
Ben Williams (Assistant Secretary)
Tom Goldsmith (incoming Board Secretary)
Gavin Berman (Staff survey team) (item 4 only)
Jo Regan (Staff survey team) (item 4 only)
Julia Horlov (Staff survey company) (item 4 only)
Kate Thompson (Staff survey company) (item 4 only)
Marianne Cwynarski (Head, Internal Communications) (item 4
only)
Reg Perry (Head, Pay and Reward Programme) (items 4 & 5
only)

1. Matters arising from previous meetings

- 1.1 **Action 1: Andrew Walker** reported that he was awaiting the outcome of meetings with other departments before he could confirm whether “Unlocking Potential” would be piloted during the new few months. This decision would largely depend to the extent to which use of the competency framework had been embedded in departments. *Action: **Executive Board members** to make clear to their departments that the Board was mandating the use of the competency framework. **Andrew Walker** to brief BMG.*
- 1.2 **Action 6: Matthew Hamlyn** noted that the information on reactive maintenance was still not robust enough to be shared with the Board. **John Borley** explained that the delay was due to a change in the device being used to log when tasks were completed and a desire to roll the scheme out to contractors. This should be completed by the end of the calendar year. The new system was having a positive impact on the processes within PED as craftsmen were now self-certifying the completion of their own work.

2. Performance and risk

- 2.1 The **Board** discussed the network refresh project.
- 2.2 The **Board** discussed the recent series of health and safety incidents.

- 2.3 The **Board** received an update on the Hansard Reporting Suite project (HRS2). This project had now been closed and would not be restarted until there was a clearer articulation of the project's objectives and what had already been achieved. Work was being done to identify the system requirement. The next stage would be to evaluate options; this work should be completed by November/December 2013.
- 2.4 The technical interdependency between HRS2 and the Core Parliamentary Information Management Framework Programme (CPIMF) was not regarded as a major issue, as the current version of the reporting suite could interact with CPIMF and the work on metadata, done as part of HRS2, had been successful. However work on website improvements had been put on hold to enable it to make use of the data generated by the new reporting system. This work might now have to go ahead separately to allow the areas of the website to be updated.
- 2.5 The **Board** discussed recent media coverage of the House Administration.
- 2.6 The **Board** discussed the stone conservation project and noted that the Department of Finance was awaiting updated information on the costs of the works.
- 2.7 The **Board** discussed the recent denial of water incident. The response, managed under the Incident Management Framework, seemed to have worked well. Lessons had been identified which would be implemented to improve responses to future incidents.
- 2.8 **Myfanwy Barrett** introduced the Financial Outturn report. There was a large number of variances but it was too early in the financial year to decide whether a supplementary estimate would be necessary. There had been another large fluctuation in pension costs, which showed the value of merging the staff pension scheme with the Civil Service scheme. Currently Facilities was projecting a capital overspend and there might also be additional demand from PICT for investment. The situation would be kept under review. There had also been some fluctuation in the pension costs that fell within the remit of the Members Estimate.
- 2.9 A new head of management accounting had been appointed. She would be focusing on improving management information and forecasting, as well as leading on the cost analysis project.
- 2.10 Progress on reducing the costs of the Metropolitan Police contract was discussed. Some savings had been realised, a new contract manager had been appointed and progress was being made on preparing for a new contract under the Security Arrangements Renewal Programme. In line with the recommendation of the zero-based review, some security officer posts were being replaced by Doorkeepers.

3. Oral updates from Board members

- 3.1 **John Pullinger** reported that the planning application for the Education Centre had been submitted and the project was currently on track. Discussions with the Commission had been positive, engagement with the Lords was ongoing and the Royal Parks had now dropped its objection.
- 3.2 IPSA officials were engaging with the House Service on the proposal for annual reporting by Members, included in IPSA's current consultation on Members' pay and pensions.
- 3.3 Approval had been given for a TV documentary about the work of the House, which would be led by Michael Cockerell. This would be the first such documentary in 30 years.
- 3.4 The weekend of 21 September was Open House weekend, which this year would include events in Parliament Square. Transport for London and the Mayor's office were now engaged in discussions to improve the situation in Parliament Square more generally.
- 3.5 **Alex Jablonowski** noted that this was his final Board meeting. The House Service had developed greatly over the last five years, but he felt there were still areas where further improvements were needed, such as workforce change, creating a culture that focused on value for money, a risk-based approach to managing services, creating more shared services with the House of Lords and securing greater value from the Metropolitan Police contract. The finance function was hugely improved, but there was now a chance to go further and improve the quality of financial management information to support better decision making.
- 3.6 **David Natzler** noted that the Deputy Speaker had resigned and that the administrative arrangements to support the election of a successor were in hand. The House had been recalled to debate Syria; the recall had gone well thanks to the efforts of staff. He expressed his thanks to the Department of Facilities for their support of the DCCS/DIS co-location pilot in Tothill Street and the refurbishment of the former operator bureau accommodation in the Palace.
- 3.7 **Matthew Hamlyn** noted that Board members had been sent information on the proposed arrangements for the Strategy away day and the new quarterly performance review meetings.
- 3.8 **Joan Miller** reported that the pilot of Microsoft Office 365 had been launched in PICT and had identified a number of technical issues that were being addressed. The engagement plan for Office 365 included rolling out the pilot to some other parts of the administration and to a few Members in the next few months. Steven Mark would be replacing Fergus Reid as PICT's director of resources in November.
- 3.9 **Andrew Walker** reported that the Travel Office contract would end in the middle of 2014 and DHRC would be running workshops with the main user groups in October to establish the business requirements for the new contract.

- 3.10 The Commission had had a useful discussion on zero hour contracts and had remitted this issue to the Finance and Services Committee for review. This would cause a delay in delivering planned changes in Catering but the responsible director believed that it was manageable in the short-term. DHRC would coordinate departments' input into this review. **Barbara Scott** recommended that the Finance and Services Committee be provided with information about the NHS's extensive use of such contracts.
- 3.11 **Myfanwy Barrett** reported that the Commission had agreed to go ahead with merger of the staff pension scheme with the Civil Service Pension Scheme.
- 3.12 The **Chair** reported that G8 Speakers' Conference had been highly successful and was an excellent example of teams from across the House Service coming together to deliver a high quality service. He was very proud of what the staff involved had achieved.

4. Staff survey

- 4.1 The Board discussed the report on the staff survey. During the discussion the following points were made:
- The pay offer had clearly had a significant impact on the response, but a lot of the issues raised were familiar from previous years.
 - There had been a number of formal performance management cases last year, including one dismissal. However, there were currently no active cases.
 - Board members needed to lead by example on performance management. They should consider whether they were aware of any individuals in their area who were not performing to the required standard but were not in formal performance measures.
 - Performance management was often invisible to staff who were not directly involved in the process. However, they would notice the resultant improvement in their colleagues' performance if the process was successful.
 - While it might be possible to simplify performance management procedures they would need to remain robust enough to protect the House from the legal risk of losing cases at Employment Tribunals.
 - There was a sense in the staff survey that good performance was not being recognised. Board members noted that events such as thank-you parties for staff were a tangible way of recognising good performance.
 - There was a strong theme of staff not feeling that the Board was valuing them or their contribution.
 - The House Service needed to work on the issue of trust, not just staff trusting the Board, but also the Board trusting staff. The survey finding that many managers did not feel they would be supported in performance managing their staff was a sign of this lack of trust.
 - The results on trust might be due to a perception by staff that there was a gap between the Board's public commitments and its actions.

- While it was more difficult to change negative opinion than positive opinions, the significant improvement in the Department of Finance scores showed that it was possible.
- Time recording was one of causes of the lack of trust. Senior managers needed to do a better job of explaining the purpose of the system. The intention was not to “snoop” on staff but to ensure that workloads were properly managed, to identify overworking and support informal flexi-time arrangements.
- Staff needed to be provided with more information about the position of the Respect policy. Staff, especially those in Member-facing roles, understood the environment in which the policy had been developed and in which it was being reviewed, and management should be frank about the resulting challenges.
- Work had already been undertaken to examine how the role of harassment officers, to be renamed “valuing others officers”, could be involved in supporting staff that suffered from Member harassment.
- The House Service should not limit itself to comparing its survey scores with the civil service; it should aspire to be comparable with the highest-performing organisations.
- It would be helpful if tailored reports could be produced for departments to provide more in-depth analysis on specific issues that they faced.

4.2 The Board **considered** and **agreed** the draft communications. The Board **considered** a draft of a message to staff about the full survey report. **Action: Matthew Hamlyn** to co-ordinate the agreement by Board members of a message to be issued to senior leaders on Friday 13 September and all staff on Monday 16 September.

4.3 The Board discussed the proposed follow up work to the survey. The value of covering issues of trust and performance management was noted. This process should be completed much earlier that it had been in the previous year. The Board **agreed** to delegate to Jo Regan and Gavin Berman responsibility for arranging the follow-up work with the survey company, in consultation with Business Management Directors.

5. Pay and reward

5.1 The **Board** discussed pay and reward.

6. Procurement

6.1 The Board discussed the plan to create a unified parliamentary procurement team.

6.2 The **Board** endorsed the recommendation in the paper that the Clerks agree that the House of Lords host the unified parliamentary procurement function.

7. Programme and Project Assurance

7.1 The **Board** took note of the annual report of the Parliamentary Programme and Project Assurance Office. **Matthew Hamlyn** emphasised the importance of managers ensuring that trained reviewers were, wherever possible, released from their normal duties to allow them to conduct Gateway reviews. Alex Jablonowski noted that the audit committees of the two Houses were likely to consider the report at a future meeting. **Matthew Hamlyn** added that a paper from Management would be submitted to that meeting outlining actions taken in response to Gateway reviews.

8. Estates Strategy

8.1 The Board discussed the Estates Strategy. In discussion the following points were made:

- Having an SRO and a deputy SRO on a single programme was not a robust governance model, as it rendered overall responsibility for delivery unclear.
- The majority of the buildings on the Parliamentary Estate were occupied by either Commons or Lords staff; only a few were shared and in those cases there was a clear majority occupier. Therefore it would be possible to constitute the Outbuildings Refurbishment Programme as two separate programmes, one for each House, with the Parliamentary Estates Board (PEB) playing a co-ordinating role.
- Having two separate programmes would increase the number of interdependencies that needed to be managed.
- Final decisions on appointing senior SROs at this level were made by the Corporate Officer(s) as appropriate – they would consult their respective Boards as necessary.

8.2 The **Board** agreed that the Outbuilding Refurbishment Programme should be managed by two separate programmes with their own SROs.

9. Any other business

9.1 The **Chair** expressed the Board's gratitude to Alex Jablonowski for his contribution to the House Service during his five years as a non-executive member of the Management Board and for his service as the first external Chair of the House's Audit Committees.

[adjourned at 6pm

Matthew Hamlyn
Secretary

Robert Rogers
Chairman

3 October 2013