

## MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE HELD ON 24 OCTOBER 2016

### Present:

Ian Ailles, Director General of the House of Commons (Chair)  
Myfanwy Barrett, Finance Director, and Director General, Corporate Services  
David Natzler, Clerk of the House and Head of the House Service

Apologies: None

### In attendance:

Marianne Cwynarski, Secretary to the Commission  
Sarah Petit, Secretary to the Executive Committee

## QUARTERLY ASSURANCE REVIEW

*The Executive Committee is responsible for:*

- *Holding the Commons Board to account for delivery of and performance against the strategy for the House of Commons Service.*
- *Providing assurance and holding the Commons Board to account on risk.*

### 1. Assurance – Quarter Two, 2016/17

- 1.1 The Committee considered the papers relating to the performance of the organisation in the second quarter of 2016-17, the note of decisions and actions arising from the Board's review of quarterly performance held on 14 October 2016, and the notes of the September financial challenge meetings held with individual Teams.
- 1.2 The Committee considered the projects and programmes report.
- 1.3 The Committee considered progress against the corporate business plan key milestones for 2016/17.
- 1.4 The Committee considered the financial health check. The Finance Director advised that it is currently challenging to carry out financial monitoring without clarity on restoration and renewal, and because of a lack of visibility on Digital spending.
- 1.5 The Committee discussed the risk of nugatory expenditure on acquiring new buildings to facilitate restoration and renewal, which mainly related to the acquisition of Richmond House. The Committee agreed that the risk of *not* spending money in preparation for restoration and renewal would be greater. The Finance Director advised that her team had recently held useful discussions about this issue with the National Audit Office. **The Committee agreed to draw this issue to the attention of the Commission at its next meeting.**
- 1.6 The Committee considered the critical business risks. The Committee noted that there were a number of risks which it considered the House Service to be managing

effectively but of which it would nonetheless be useful for the Commission to be aware. **The Committee agreed to draw to the attention of the Commission at its next meeting the various risks around health and safety.**

- 1.7 The Committee noted the recent growth in the Digital Service budget and considered the respective roles of the Digital Strategy Board and the Joint Investment Board in overseeing expenditure by the Digital Service. The Committee noted that the Director General would discuss this issue with the Clerk of the Parliaments at their next meeting. **The Committee agreed that it should receive routine reports from the Joint Investment Board.**
- 1.8 The Committee noted the intention of the Finance Director to accelerate the efficiencies programme in early 2017.
- 1.9 The Committee considered the actions proposed by the Board in response to the various issues raised at the quarterly performance review on 14 October and was satisfied with the proposed approach.
- 1.10 **The Executive Committee agreed to provide assurance to the Commission in relation to performance and risk during the second quarter of 2016/17.**

## **2. Future assurance on risk**

- 2.1 The Committee considered the formal responsibilities of the Board, the Executive Committee, the Audit Committee and the Commission in relation to risk, how they fulfilled them currently and proposals for how they might do so in the future. These would involve a greater role for the Audit Committee and the Commission.
- 2.2 **The Committee agreed to discuss these proposals with the Chair of the Audit Committee and to circulate a paper to the Commission/MEC in November.**

Sarah Petit  
Secretary to the Executive Committee