

**Minutes of the Management Board meeting
held on Thursday 1 May 2014 at 11.30am**

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 CB (Director General of Information Services)
Andrew Walker (Director General of HR and Change)
Dame Janet Gaymer DBE (non-executive member)
Barbara Scott (non-executive member)

In attendance: Tom Goldsmith (Board Secretary)
Ben Williams (Assistant Secretary)
Amanda Colledge (Head, Management Accounting)
(items 4 & 5 only)
Jane Hough (Strategy, Planning and Performance Manager)
(items 4 & 5 only)

1. Actions arising

1.1 **Tom Goldsmith** updated the Board on actions arising from the previous meetings.

Actions 3-7: Board members' feedback on the template letter of appointment for SROs had been received and a revised draft would be circulated by the end of the week commencing 5 May.

Action 8: Myfanwy Barrett said that a training proposal from Deloitte had been received.

Action 11: PICTAB would be discussing this issue at its meeting later in the day and would bring forward a solution.

2. Oral Updates

2.1 **Andrew Walker** updated the Board on the latest discussion with the Unions on the pay settlement. The Health, Safety and Wellbeing Service was being restructured to allow the safety function to focus on its core duties. The support service for Members' staff had been launched. The first of the rolling Investors in People reviews would be starting soon. It had been agreed to space the reviews over the year rather than having a single large exercise. BMG would oversee this process.

2.2 **Joan Miller** reported that Office 365 had now been rolled out to all House staff and that the Member-pilot had started. PICT was working closely with the Administration Committee and Lords Information Committee on the pilot and it was hoped that the Member roll-out would be completed in August. The core

log-in system was being replaced, which would lead to the start of user self-service for ICT problems; this would be additional to the current service-desk support. There would be a soft-launch for the first batch of data being released as part of data.parliament in mid-May.

- 2.3 **David Natzler** noted that the H2S Bill had passed second reading which triggered the public petitioning process. An election would be held for a new chair of the Defence Select Committee on Wednesday 14 May. There was now an urgent need to establish the audio-video work as a formal programme and to clarify the financial and reporting arrangements.
- 2.4 **John Pullinger** reported that the latest audit of political engagement had been published. There was a continuing negative trend of perceptions of politics but a continuing upward trend in people's knowledge of parliament.
- 2.5 **John Borley** reported that the deputising arrangement had worked well in PED during the director's absence. Fiona Reynolds had been invited to speak to the Restoration and Renewal advisory group on the National Trust's experiences of adapting old buildings. The capital forecasting review had been completed and would be considered by the Finance and Services Committee at their next meeting.
- 2.6 The **Chair** reported that the Administration Committee's meeting on General Election Planning and Member induction, which he had attended, had gone well. In response to the announcement of his retirement many Members had been in touch to tell him how much they value the support provided to them by the House Service. **Andrew Walker** reported that the Commission had met to discuss the recruitment of a successor; there would be a fully open competition.

3. Performance and Risk

- 3.1 A business case was being developed to replace the cameras in Westminster Hall and plans were in place to relocate cameras from other sites if the current arrangements failed. In the longer term a new camera set-up should lead to resource savings.
- 3.2 The Board discussed the programme of 2015 events. Both Speakers had been briefed on the proposals and the risk of permission not being granted for the use of Westminster Hall was decreasing.
- 3.3 The Board noted the reduction in the performance indicators relating to the speed of security clearances. This was due to a staffing gap in the office and pressure from other work streams. It was noted that DIS employed a number of Band D staff who might be able to be temporarily redeployed to meet the shortfall.
- 3.4 The Board noted that the finance risk had increased and that action was planned to return the risk to its target level.

- 3.5 **Action: John Borley** agreed to explore the likely end date of the Westminster Hall Internal walls cleaning project with the project team. If the work was not completed on schedule it had already been agreed that work would stop, and the scaffolding would be removed, to allow the 2015 events to take place.

Financial Monitoring

- 3.6 **Myfanwy Barrett** reported that the overall position at the end of last year had not changed significantly since the last report. The stewardship report was being prepared and would come to the next Board meeting. This would include further analysis of underspend and would seek to identify capacity that could be captured in the next planning round. The audit report on monthly forecasting had been finalised. Meetings were being arranged between the Director of Finance, the Head of Management Accounting, Heads of Department and departmental financial leads to discuss next steps.

4. Resource Allocation and Unit Costs.

- 4.1 The **Chair** thanked Amanda Colledge, on behalf of the Board, for her work on the capital forecasting review.
- 4.2 **Amanda Colledge** introduced her paper. The Department of Finance had worked with departmental teams to shift cost modelling to focus on purpose of expenditure. It was hoped that this information would help the Board in the development of its strategy for the new Parliament by allowing it to see how it might reprioritise its expenditure to match its strategic priorities. The information on unit costs was aimed at informing operational decision-making and still needed to be developed further.
- 4.3 The Board considered the paper. In discussion the following points were made:
- The resource allocation information would be a key input for the development of a strategy.
 - The unit cost information was interesting but would require further work.
 - The unit cost figures were very dependent on the assumptions made, the treatment of the overhead and the choice made about categorisation.
 - It was important that figures were compared with external benchmarks; the benchmarks chosen should reflect the kind of organisation the House wanted to become.
 - The House Service was often asked for the parts of information contained in the unit cost analysis. This information would ensure that consistent information was given in reply to these requests and would be useful for financial planning.
 - Once the figures were more developed consideration would be given to the proactive publication of some sections. This document was a work in

progress and as such some of the terminology would need to be revisited ahead of making any sections publically available.

5. House of Commons Strategy 2015-20

5.1 **Jane Hough** introduced her paper and noted that it was focused on the process for developing the strategy rather than its content. The paper contained: the OCE's thoughts on what had worked well, and less well, with the current strategy and a summary of what a good strategy contains and does, based on academic literature. An outline timetable for the strategy's development was included. The Board's feedback was requested on this and the proposals for staff involvement and external input.

5.2 The Board considered the paper; during discussion the following points were made:

- A wider range of stakeholder perspectives of the House Service should be gathered to inform the Strategy.
- The Board needed to be clearer about who the strategy was aimed at.
- A new strategy should drive business decisions and resource allocations.
- The current four words "efficient, effective, well-informed, respected" were well understood by staff and there might be value in retaining this brand.
- Members should be involved in the development of the strategy. The new Commission should be presented with meaningful choices about the strategy after the election.
- The link between strategy and financial planning cycles needed to be better developed. **Action: Jane Hough and Myfanwy Barrett to discuss the interaction of the strategy development with financial planning.**
- The Board should discuss ideas for the strategy with their senior leadership discussion groups. **Action: Jane Hough to e-mail Board members with a deadline for ideas for the 2015 Strategy from their senior leadership discussion groups.**

6. A.O.B.

6.1 The **Chair** said that the paper from the Diversity & Inclusion team was good and that he hoped the House Service could become yet more ambitious in terms of D&I objectives.

6.2 **Myfanwy Barrett** suggested that the proposal to send Departmental Management Board papers to Management Board members would be too burdensome. **Tom Goldsmith** said the suggestion was to send a digest of PEB and PICTAB papers to Board members who did not attend those meetings. **Myfanwy Barrett** said that this was a good idea.

6.3 **David Natzler** noted the paper on events to commemorate the First World War and asked whether the project was sufficiently resourced. **John Pullinger** replied that he thought it was but that he would discuss this with the team responsible for delivering the events.