

**Minutes of the Management Board meeting  
held on Thursday 9 May 2013 at 11.30 am**

**Those present:** Sir Robert Rogers KCB (Clerk and Chief Executive) (Chairman)  
David Natzler (Clerk Assistant and Director General of Chamber and Committee Services)<sup>1</sup>  
John Borley CB (Director General of Facilities)  
John Pullinger (Director General of Information Services)  
Andrew Walker (Director General of HR and Change)  
Joan Miller (Director of PICT, external member)  
Myfanwy Barrett (Director of Finance)  
Alex Jablonowski (non-executive member)  
Barbara Scott (non-executive member)

**In attendance:** Matthew Hamlyn (Board Secretary)  
Ben Williams (Assistant Secretary)  
Reg Perry (Head of Employment Relations) (Item 4 only)  
Marianne Cwynarski (Head of Internal Communications) (Item 4 only)  
John Greenaway (Head, HR Delivery Programme) (Item 5 only)  
Steve O'Connor (Director of Technology) (Item 6 only)  
Victoria Payne (Head of IRIS) (Item 7 only)

**1. Matters arising from previous meetings**

1.1 **Matthew Hamlyn** updated the Board. Action 1: **Myfanwy Barrett** assured the Board that the action was in hand. Action 5: The additional information the Board had requested on sickness data required manual intervention. This information was available to departments via their departmental business partners. It would also be included in the annual report of HR data that the Board would receive in July. Action complete.

**2. Performance and risk**

2.1 **John Pullinger** asked whether the impact of possible lower levels of Parliamentary business over the next two sessions had been taken into account in assessing the Savings Programme's RAG and the likelihood of the savings target being met. DCCS should be encouraged to forecast their budget on the basis of the most likely scenario, rather than the least favourable scenario. The **Chairman** agreed that the DCCS budget should reflect the likely level of business for the rest of the session. Any resulting reduction in their budget could be reallocated to the central contingency – which could be made available if there was an unforeseen increase in demand.

2.2 **Myfanwy Barrett** said that the red rating reflected the risk to delivery of some savings strands, which had increased since January. The Department

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<sup>1</sup> Unavoidably absent until item 3.4

of Finance had met with DCCS to discuss their underspend and had identified areas where further savings could be made. However this did not detract from the fact some of the savings strands were off track. The savings target should be delivered by achieving the planned savings, rather than relying on an underspend. **Andrew Walker** noted that even if the savings target could be met in 2015 through utilising an underspend, this would only be a short term solution as business would be likely to increase with the start of a new Parliament. **Alex Jablonowski** said that the Board needed to look at the savings gap in more detail.

- 2.3 **John Borley** reported that the red status on reactive maintenance performance was due to process issues - actions not being closed when work had been completed - rather than the jobs not being done.
- 2.4 **Myfanwy Barrett** asked for an update on the Education Centre. **John Pullinger** said the project was on track to deliver the key benefits by September 2014. The main proposal was progressing well and two alternative locations were being actively developed in parallel.
- 2.5 **John Pullinger** noted that with the support of PICT additional resource had been found to support the IS programme, whose RAG status had improved since last month as a result.
- 2.6 The **Chairman** requested that the sickness absence data routinely include a public sector figure for comparison. **Andrew Walker** undertook that DHRC would provide this in future.
- 2.7 **John Borley** noted that the CO<sub>2</sub> environmental target indicator was red as our emissions had very slightly exceeded the target, due to the recent cold weather. The red rating reflected the high standards the team responsible set; the overall environmental RAG rating was Amber.
- 2.8 **Myfanwy Barrett** reported that the stewardship meetings with departments to discuss last year's financial outturn had begun. The focus was on areas with an underspend. The outcomes of these meetings would be reflected in the Stewardship report the Board would receive in June. The NAO had been kept informed about the House's financial position and understood the reasons for the underspend.

### **3. Oral updates from Board members**

- 3.1 **John Borley** updated the Board on discussions with Member bodies on catering prices and third party events. The **Chairman** noted that the Commission and the Finance & Services Committee had both agreed in principle to the new arrangements for third party events.
- 3.2 **John Borley** informed the Board of the death of Doreen Corbett, Chef de Partie. The Board expressed its sympathy to Ms Corbett's family for their loss; the **Chairman** said that he had written to Ms Corbett's mother.

- 3.4 **Myfanwy Barrett** reported back on the Finance and Service Committee's discussion on the financial remit.
- 3.5 **John Pullinger** informed the Board that the recent 'Parliaments on the Net' Conference had been a great success. A number of other Parliaments were seeking to learn from the work done by the UK Parliament in this area. There were also areas where we could learn from other Parliaments, notably on open data and audio-visual material. He hoped that the House could move ahead on these areas relatively quickly and cheaply and would take this forward with PICTAB. A video produced by the Education Service on the House of Commons Chamber had won an award at the New York Festivals.
- 3.6 **Joan Miller** reported that the Operator Bureau's relocation to Southampton had now been completed. There had been slow internet access on the Estate for the last two days due to a hardware problem on one of the two proxy servers. PICT had discussed the response time with the service provider and had emphasised the need for the provider to meet its contractually agreed target response times.
- 3.7 **David Natzler** reported that DCCS was working with PED to convert the space previously occupied by the Operator Bureau into a Production Unit. There had been a number of recent incidents where audio and TV feed and/or lighting had been lost in the Chamber. The new style Order Paper had been launched, which was simpler for users, more compatible with online use and more diversity friendly. So far no complaints had been received and there had been positive feedback. The Board congratulated the Table Office and others involved for their work on the new Order Paper.
- 3.8 The **Chairman** informed the Board he had now spoken to Dame Janet Gaymer who had accepted the post of non-executive Board Member and Chair of the Audit Committee in succession to Alex Jablonowski. Dame Janet would attend the Board and Audit Committee meetings in July, in advance of taking up her new position in September.
- 3.9 Following several deaths in service, the **Chairman** encouraged Heads of Department to inform the Speaker's Chaplain so that she could offer counselling support to bereaved staff.

#### 4. **Pay and reward**

- 4.1 **Reg Perry** introduced his paper. If the Board agreed to the approach outlined in this paper it would mean not delivering some outcomes to the timescale originally agreed. In particular, waiting on the result of the court case would mean it would not be possible to introduce a new pay and reward system before the end of the current financial year. This time would be used to engage with staff, including non-unionised staff, to listen to their thoughts about the previous pay offer. The Board also needed to make a decision on the payment of non-consolidated awards to staff.

4.2 The Board considered the paper. In discussion the following points were raised.

*Court case*

- *The Board **agreed** to await the outcome of the Court case before re-opening formal negotiations with the unions on pay and reward.*

*Pay proposal for 2013/14*

- Different parts of the civil service were using the 1% maximum permitted increase in the consolidated pay bill in different ways. Some were giving a 1% rise to all staff, while others were deploying the increase to achieve a limited amount of pay reform.
- Using the 1% increase in the pay bill to achieve limited reform of pay and reward structures would signal the Board's commitment to achieving its desired outcomes on pay and reward. If 1% were paid to all staff the Board would need to make clear that this was not the end of its intention to secure pay reform.
- Doing anything other than paying a flat 1% to all staff would require further discussion with the unions.
- Giving staff at the top of their pay band a consolidated payment would exacerbate the current problem of overlapping paybands, and would not be in line with the Civil Service. Staff at the top of their payband could instead be given a non-consolidated 1% payment, as proposed in the paper.
- No decision should be taken on SCS pay ahead of the outcome of the senior pay panel meeting. The outcome of the panel discussion would be sent to the Chairman for a decision.
- *The Board **agreed** to pay a 1% pay increase to all staff in A-E and catering grades, except those at the top of their payband who would receive a non-consolidated 1% payment.*

*Non-consolidated payments*

- The system of paying annual non-consolidated payments in bands A-E had been introduced following the abolition of the previous performance award scheme (PAS). The PAS had been abolished shortly before the pay freeze started. It was therefore decided to follow the civil service's approach of using money previously assigned to the performance award scheme to mitigate the impact of the pay freeze. Payments had been made to all staff not in formal performance measures.
- The intention had been to phase these payments out over three years as part of the pay and reward offer, as a new system of contribution pay was to be introduced.
- If the payments were made this should be the last year in which they were made. The payment should be made in September, as had been the case in previous years.
- While the current system was less than ideal, it should continue until a new system could be implemented

- The Board **agreed** to make non-consolidated payments in September to all staff in bands A-E who were not in performance management. The payments would not be made in future years.

#### *Delivery risks*

- The Board would have a clearer idea of the timetable for the court case next week, but it was unlikely that a judgment would be reached before Christmas.
- The delay would have a significant impact on the House's financial plans as it was a major source of uncertainty.
- The Board noted the risks to the delivery timetable and **agreed** to accept these risks.

#### *Time recording*

- One option would be to improve the existing spreadsheet and use it as a management tool.
- The existing spreadsheet might not be robust enough to be used as a management tool.
- While a new tool would be needed if it was to interface with payroll, if it was just used by local management in the interim an excel spreadsheet should be sufficient. Many organisations used fairly simple spreadsheets for managing times of attendance.
- Using the information for management purposes would be a change in policy and the Trade Unions would need to be informed.
- Local management could use the information recorded by the system to operate informal flexi-time and time off in lieu (TOIL) systems.
- The information gained through central collection of time recording data was becoming less valuable and should be stopped, especially given the resource required.
- A number of staff supported informal local flexi-time arrangements but disliked using the current tool because it was unwieldy and because of its association with the former HRPPP programme.
- The Board **agreed** that time recording would continue but that the data would not be collected centrally and there would be no mandated format. Local management would be allowed to use the information to inform managers and support agreed local, informal, flexible working arrangements. **Action: Andrew Walker** would refresh the time recording guidance to set out the position, clarifying what was compulsory and what was at manager's discretion. The draft guidance would be sent to the Board for agreement.

#### *Communications*

- The Board would need to inform the Commission of its decision so that communications to staff could start. The next Commission meeting was on 20 May so a staff announcement could be made on 21 May. A message should be sent to staff in the afternoon and the Finance and Service Committee should be sent an update that morning.
- The message should cover the 1% pay increase and the decision to make the non-consolidated payments.

- The message would need to cover the impact on catering.
- The message would also announce the intention to hold meetings with staff, but details of those meetings would be issued separately.
- *The Board **agreed** to send a message to staff following the Commission meeting and to ensure the Finance and Services Committee were briefed. **Action: Reg Perry, Marianne Cwynarski, Matthew Hamlyn and the Chairman** to agree the drafting.*

## 5. People Strategy

- 5.1 **Andrew Walker** introduced the paper. The paper set out two lists of activities that arose from the people strategy. The second list focused on the elements that were less tangible or that were outside the direct responsibility of DHRC, because they depended on managers across the House Service taking action. The Gateway review had argued that not enough was being done to bring this part of the strategy to life. The paper proposed asking for a small number of volunteers from departments to champion these areas – to motivate departments to work together and share best practice. Andrew Walker would lead this group of champions. He had considered having Board level champions but a number of senior leaders had said they wanted the opportunity to take ownership of this process themselves.
- 5.2 **John Greenaway** said that Annex A of the paper set out work that fell within the HR Delivery Programme or that was covered by the DHRC business plan. In these areas it was clear what activity was being taken and would be easy to monitor. Activities to address action in Annex B were less tangible and often involved a number of separate initiatives at departmental level. Some of the roles envisaged for of the champions would be to bring together these different activities, and to encourage departments to learn from each other.
- 5.3 The Board considered the paper. In discussion the following points were raised.
- It would be helpful to have greater clarity around the precise role of these champions.
  - Some of the areas that would be covered by champions, such as engaging staff, improving leaders and managers and organising ourselves were very large; it might be more appropriate to have a Board level champion for these areas.
  - The seniority of a champion would affect the nature of the role. Board level champions would be likely to focus on increasing an issue's profile, while champions at the next level down could act as sources of knowledge and expertise for their subject area.
  - Managers might find engaging with a large number of different champions overwhelming.
- 5.4 *The Board **agreed** to the “light touch” approach outlined in the paper, involving champions around the House Service. **Action: Andrew Walker** to develop the specification for the Champion role.*

## 6. ICT Strategy

6.1 The Board considered the paper. In discussion the following points were raised.

- The proposed transfer to Office 365 in the Cloud was sensible, but care should be taken to ensure that business data continued to be managed and saved within corporate systems - the new operating system would need to be compatible with SPIRE.
- Effective electronic records management was more dependent on staff's behaviour than the underlying technology – continuing education in good practice would be needed.
- The SIRO had been consulted about data security, as had the lawyers about data sovereignty and the Parliamentary Security Director, and they were satisfied that all reasonable steps had been taken to secure the House's data. It was noted the new situation would be a major improvement on the status quo. Much had been done to mitigate the risks relating to data security and data sovereignty were likely to be very low, although the SIROs were still waiting for a final view from the Accreditor before taking a formal view of risk.
- The roll out of Office 365 to Members should be used as an opportunity to raise all users awareness of data security issues.
- It was important that rigorous testing be conducted on document templates to ensure that they worked in the new system.
- Moving to Office 365 meant that the administration would no longer be able to control when the operating system upgraded, although they would be given advance notice by Microsoft.
- PICT needed to ensure it engaged effectively with Member Committees to mitigate the risk of Members not feeling they had been properly informed of the change ahead of implementation.

6.2 The Board **agreed** the approach to the managed deployment of Office 365 to staff and Members of both Houses, as set out in the business case and agreed the approach to Member engagement set out in the paper.

6.3 The Board **agreed** that from the next General Election Office 365 in the Cloud would be the only offering made to Members.

## 7. Freedom of information

7.1 Victoria Payne introduced her paper. The paper recommended the proactive publication of some data sets based on information that was regularly released in response to freedom of information requests, and those likely to be listed by the Information Commissioners Office's (ICO) forthcoming definition document. There were a number of benefits to proactive publication: interest in data sets tended to reduce once they were routinely made available and it would also increase the number of requests that could be managed through the use of section 21 (information already available) and section 22 (information due to be published). When requests were dealt with in this way IRIS often did not need to contact the responsible business area,

thereby reducing pressure on staff. Currently 20% of requests satisfied by the information requested already being available or was scheduled to be published. IRIS would like to substantially increase that number. A number of the business areas concerned were keen to publish this information.

7.2 The Board considered the paper. In discussion the following points were raised:

- Managers would be interested in seeing statistics about the number of requests received and how they were currently dealt with. IRIS could provide managers with that information. *Action: **Andrew Walker** to ensure that IRIS provides managers who request it with a briefing on volume of and responses to FOI requests.*
- Care should be taken to present information published proactively in an accessible and understandable way, otherwise the House risked being accused of “dumping” data.
- IRIS needed to be confident that there was a demand for the data sets being published and that we were not going to regularly publish new sets on the basis of a one-off request.
- The House already published information on contracts and tenders through the e-portal. IRIS was working with CSD to be clearer with bidders what information might be published at the start of the process, as consultation with third parties was the largest cause of delays in processing these requests. There was no prospect of publishing commercially confidential information under this arrangement, as that was exempt under the Act.
- Publishing information on gifts and hospitality was a requirement of the ICO scheme. The opportunity could be taken to consolidate a single register, with a consistent disposal policy, across the organisation.
- There was more work to do on publishing procedural data in accessible electronic form, due to delays with data.parliament.uk.
- Thought should be given to the merits of publishing future editions of Erskine May in an on-line, free access format, given its importance to the work of the House; but it was also pointed out that the House did not own this publication.
- Staff newsletters should not be proactively published as they contained personal information that was exempt from publication under the Act.
- The Audit Committees should be consulted prior to a decision being taken on publishing Internal Audit Reports.
- The DCCS office guides should not be proactively published

7.3 *The Board **agreed** to the decision making process, involving BRG, set out in the paper.*

7.4 *The Board **agreed** to publish the data set out in Annex B of the paper, with the following conditions:*

- *IRIS to confirm with the relevant business areas that they wished to proactively publish items 5.3-5.5*
- *Items 6.1, 7.2 and 7.5 were not to be proactively published*
- *The Audit Committees were to be consulted before item 7.3 was published*



## 8. Any other business

- 8.1 The **Chairman** asked Heads of Departments to encourage their staff to volunteer to help at the London G8 Speakers and Presiding Officers conference in autumn. **John Pullinger** noted the event's potential to showcase the House's public engagement activities.