

Management Board

General Election Planning Update

Paper by the Head of the Office of the Chief Executive

Purpose

1. This paper is to update the Management Board on the progress of General Election planning and on the outcome of the Director of Internal Audit's review.

Actions for the Board

2. The Board is asked to
 - 1) note the outcome of the Director of Internal Audit's review of General Election Planning (A attached)
 - 2) endorse the operational decision-making arrangements proposed by GEPG in response to this review (para 5 below)
 - 3) note that staff resource remains an area of red risk (para 10)
 - 4) note the GEPG update (B attached)
 - 5) endorse the proposed plans for media handling (paras 14-17 below)

Director of Internal Audit's review

3. At its February meeting the Board proposed that the Director of Internal Audit should carry out a light touch review of Election Planning. The outcome of the light touch review including the management response agreed by GEPG, is attached.

Operational decision-making

4. The review highlighted several areas of significant risk, including the lack of a clear arrangements for operational decision-making in the period immediately after the General Election. It recommended that GEPG identify how it would deal with problems that need to be escalated beyond the remit of individual line managers, that cut across individual departments, or where delivery was affected by unforeseen events. It also recommended that,

"It would seem that a single manager, with knowledge of the planning arrangements and capacity to be in place, should be given this authority and support, even if their decisions are subsequently found to be sub-optimal."

5. In response, GEPG recommends the following arrangements during dissolution and the early phase of the new Parliament:
 - 1) GEPG will meet weekly during dissolution and until the first week in June. GEPG will meet briefly on Friday 7 May and on Tuesday 11 May, and the Head of the

OCE maintain an open door for GEPG matters every morning until Friday 21 May. GEPG will review the regularity of its meetings in June.

- 2) The following staff should have decision-making authority for their areas of delivery:

Area of work / delivery	Lead official with decision-making authority	Contact
New Members' Reception Area (NMRA)	James Robertson	X3060
Temporary & permanent accommodation	James Robertson	X3060
ICT provision	Matthew Taylor	X2067
Written communications	[s.40]	X8135
Services for defeated Members	Paul Silk	X2600
Security Passes	Mike Naworynsky	X3040
Post-election training/ Duty of Care briefing for Members	[s.40]	X8383
Information & training for Members' staff	[s.40]	X5732
Reception and Chamber briefing	Andrew Kennon	X3312
Results and Information	Rob Clements	X3622

- 3) GEPG agrees that one person should have responsibility and decision-making authority, and propose that Philippa Helme should take on this responsibility as Chair of GEPG, with Andrew Kennon having equivalent authority in order to mitigate the risk of delayed decision making.

- 4) To manage the risk of GEPG members being bypassed by other senior managers, it is requested that Director Generals and other senior staff consult with GEPG if issues relating to the delivery of the election plan have been brought directly to them. The Board are asked to agree that senior staff should, in the event that matters within the remit of GEPG are brought to their attention directly, consult with Philippa Helme or Andrew Kennon.

- 6. The Board is asked to endorse these proposals and agree that they should be communicated to senior staff.**

IPSA readiness

7. The Audit also highlighted a risk to the reputation of the House Service if IPSA failed to provide the required level of service at the appropriate time. In response, GEPG and IPSA have drawn up a formal working agreement in relation to General Election related

activity, identifying clearly who is expected to do what. This is expected to be finalised and agreed by Friday 23 April.

Arrangements for Members' staff

8. As a result of the Audit, GEPG has also reviewed services for new Members' staff. It agreed that priority for temporary accommodation has to go to new Members, and new Members will be informed at the earliest opportunity that there will be insufficient room for their staff until Members begin to move into permanent offices. We have also taken steps to ensure new Members' staff receive induction training that suits their needs and is provided at a time agreed with the parties.

Remaining risk

9. GEPG has compiled a risk register which is updated and considered at each meeting. It will continue to review its plans and take action to mitigate risks where necessary.
10. The risk that is currently red is staff resources which relates largely to general staffing levels within the Department of Resources, and shortage of staff for greeting Members in the New Members' Reception Area.

Other delivery activity

11. The announcement that the General Election would take place on Thursday 6 May and the House would not return till Tuesday 18 May was in accordance with the Modernisation Committee Report proposal from 2007, and consistent with the preferred plans that GEPG had been making, in consultation with the major political parties. The announcement has, therefore, not resulted in any changes to GEPG plans. The attached Election Planning update gives details of activity with firm dates.
12. The Office of the Chief Executive has now sent out the information to be given to newly elected Members via the returning officer on election night. An example is being circulated with this paper.
13. There will be a full rehearsal of the NMRA on Monday 26 April, with a further test on Tuesday 4 May if deemed necessary. The exercise intent is to ensure that the NMRA arrangements are efficient, flexible and fit for purpose in receiving new Members of Parliament post the 2010 General Election. Board Members would be welcome to attend the rehearsal.

Media handling

14. GEPG agreed to make the 26 April rehearsal closed to the media. Instead, it plans to invite the media to tour the rooms and receive a briefing on what the House, and IPSA, would be providing for new Members. This will take place at 11am on the morning of Friday 7 May, one hour before the NMRA opens to new Members.
15. A risk remains that Members may arrive accompanied by the media and wish to create a story out of their first day in the new House of Commons. The BBC will be recording the audio diaries of some new MPs on their first days in Westminster. New Members may use mobile phones to record or tweet as they pass through the NMRA. There is a balance to be struck between being sensitive to the wishes of other Members and the

need to present an open and positive message as to how the House of Commons Service works.

16. To try to accommodate these potential conflicts, staff from the Events Team and Media Office will meet any press arriving at the NMRA in the reception of Portcullis House and arrange for them to interview Members at set filming points on the estate – such as in Westminster Hall. It is hoped that this will discourage the media from wishing to enter the NMRA when it is operation. GEPG have agreed with the Serjeant that rules will be relaxed slightly to reflect the use of new technology, such as camera phones, but in such a way that will not compromise security. Staff working in the NMRA will be briefed as to what to do if approached by a member of the media.
17. We will invite the Press Association, in addition to [s.40], to take photographs of the group of new Members following the Chamber briefing on Wednesday 12 May.
18. **The Board is asked to endorse these arrangements for media handling.**

Philippa Helme
Chair, General Election Planning Group
22 April 2010

A [s.36(2)(b) & s.36(2)(c)]

B General Election planning update (April 2010)

1. Plans setting out what the House provides for new Members have been developed by a cross-departmental General Election Planning Group — the membership of the Group is set out in Annex A. These plans draw on recommendations from the Administration Committee's 2005 report on post-election services for Members.
2. A note on the election timetable is attached in Annex B. As recommended by the Modernisation Committee in its report on *Revitalising the Chamber*, there will be two week-ends between the election and the House first meeting.
3. The plans for what the House service provides have been discussed regularly with party whips to ensure they are closely aligned with the arrangements the political parties themselves are making for new Members.
4. The plans allow for multiple scenarios, including a high turnover of up to 350 new Members, and will continue to be subject to regular review and development, to ensure that we do the best we can to provide an excellent service to new Members.

Dissolution

5. New **dissolution guidance** has been developed and approved by the Administration Committee, the Committee on Members' Allowances and the Electoral Commission. This has been published on the intranet:
<http://intranet/intranet/assets/dissolution-arrangements.pdf>
6. New dissolution guidance for Members' staff has been developed and approved by the Administration Committee. This has been published on the intranet:
<http://intranet.parliament.uk/intranet/assets/dissolution-members-staff.pdf>
7. The Department of Resources has been providing advice surgeries for Members who are not standing again at the General Election. The DR enquiry team will continue to deal with individual questions from Members.
<http://intranet.parliament.uk/intranet/finances/assets/whitebook.pdf>
8. Members not standing for re-election have been asked to vacate their offices by 5pm on Wednesday 21 April to enable as many offices as possible to be refurbished before 7 May. Their security passes will be deactivated on Sunday 25 April.

Post-election

9. On election night, the returning officer will give to each successful candidate a letter from the Clerk, a letter from IPSA, a **New Members' Guide**, and a form asking for essential personal information. The letter from the Clerk and the New Members' Guide asks new Members to bring certain documentation on their first day, and asks them to go straight to the New Members reception area (NMRA) in Portcullis House when they first arrive.

10. From the midday on Friday 7 May there will be a **New Members reception area** on the first floor of Portcullis House providing a range of services and advice. The priority will be to provide the following for new Members:
- Issue of Parliamentary passes
 - Issue of Parliamentary network accounts (including email), laptops, telephone extension numbers and voicemail
 - Pay & pensions advice
11. Staff from the Independent Parliamentary Standards Authority (IPSA) will be available to answer questions on subjects such as pay and the new system for expenses. Staff from the Department of Resources will be available to advise Members on areas that remain their responsibility.
12. It is anticipated that the NMRA will remain open on Monday 10 May until Thursday 13 May, from 8.30am until 8pm. Individual briefings and advice for new Members from PICT, the Department of Resources and IPSA will carry on into the second week until the demand for them is satisfied. The opening hours, and how many days it remains open, will largely depend on demand, and this will largely depend on the total number of new Members elected at the General Election.
13. The IPSA is an independent body and their offices are not part of the Parliamentary estate. However, they are a new body and will need to engage with both new and returning Members. The demand for their services may continue longer than the lifetime of the NMRA. It is expected that the IPSA may retain a presence on site temporarily after the NMRA closes for the convenience of Members.
14. The **Members' Centre** in Portcullis House will provide a centre for advice to new Members once the NMRA is closed. The Parliamentary intranet has an **Online Members' Centre** (<http://intranet.parliament.uk/online-members-centre>) designed to provide access to useful information and services for Members. After 6 May, this will contain separate sections aimed specifically for new Members and new Members' staff.
15. For the first eight days after the election — including over the first weekend — there will be a dedicated **service for defeated Members** to help them conclude their affairs at Westminster. This service will be complemented by a telephone information line for the staff of defeated Members, mainly providing advice on what they have to get their (ex) Member to do. Telephone will be x2600 (or external 020 7219 2600) and the email address will be NonreturnedMP@parliament.uk. The Department of Resources will provide an advice service for the staff of defeated Members.
16. **Temporary office accommodation** will be provided for Members along the Upper Committee Corridor in the Palace of Westminster and 1 Parliament Street. This will comprise 159 desk spaces in open plan rooms, intended for 'hot-desking' rather than allocated places, and over 300 lockers for the storage of laptops, papers etc. This should enable over 300 Members using laptops to carry out office work until they are allocated permanent office accommodation.
17. The delivery of **permanent office accommodation** will depend on decisions by the Accommodation Whips – the House Service aims to be able to move each

Member into their office[s] within 1 week of the Whips agreeing on allocation with the Members concerned. This represents a considerable challenge and both PICT & the Department of Facilities have made arrangements for additional contract resources to cope with the high number of moves that this will entail.

18. **ICT provision** – all new Members will be given a laptop, a telephone number and access to voicemail on the first day. PICT has arranged additional resource with the IT supplier (Dell) to cope with a large number of new Members.
19. The House Service will provide and facilitate a range of training for new Members. This has been prepared in co-ordination with the three main parties. This will include:
 - A briefing for all new Members on **Chamber etiquette** led by experienced Members and senior staff. This will be held in the Commons Chamber at 9.30am on Wednesday 12 May, followed by a group photograph in Westminster Hall.
 - **Further briefings** to cover security, pay, pensions & allowances, accommodation, IT, employment of staff, FOI and data protection, will be incorporated into individual party briefings. These will be given by senior House Staff.
20. A **programme of talks and briefing** for Members has been planned starting in the week of Monday 17 May. A draft schedule is attached in annex C. This will be phased in between the Election and the summer recess, and the political parties have been given an opportunity to review its content and inform priority.
21. Post-election briefings by other organisations (e.g. Hansard Society/Institute of Government and the LSE), which have support from the parties, have been developed. A senior member of House staff is coordinating all Member-facing briefing activities in order to ensure that there are no unnecessary overlaps in content or conflicts of space and time.
22. A separate programme of induction training for new **Members' staff** has been developed in co-operation with Capita and IPSA. This will cover issues such as security, use of IT, expenses, and how to make best use of the library. The House will provide an e-learning system that is available for all Westminster and constituency staff.
23. Experience from previous elections suggest there is a lag time between new Members arriving and new Members staff being appointed. Therefore, the induction training for Members' staff will be provided through the summer and, along with open days for constituency staff, into the autumn.
24. The website www.w4mp.com (which is funded by the Department of Resources) is producing a guidebook for new Members' staff.

The Independent Parliamentary Standards Authority (IPSA)

25. Responsibility for the payment of Members' salaries and the determination and payment of Members' expenses will pass to IPSA in April. IPSA have been regularly

consulted during the planning process, and a representative has attended GEPG meetings in order to ensure that its plans dovetail with those of the House Service.

26. IPSA will have a presence in the New Members Reception Area (NMRA) and will, if necessary, have a presence on the estate for a short period afterwards.

27. We are committed to work with IPSA to avoid duplication of effort for new Members. To this end a joint working agreement, setting out areas of responsibility, has been developed.

22 April 2010

ANNEX A

General Election Planning – main areas of work & delivery		
Area of work / delivery	Lead Official	Contact
New Members' Reception Area (NMRA)	James Robertson	X3060
Temporary & permanent accommodation	James Robertson	X3060
ICT provision	Matthew Taylor	X2067
Written communications	[s.40]	X8135
Services for defeated Members	Paul Silk	X2600
NMRA rehearsal	Mike Naworynsky	X3040
Dissolution work	[s.40]	X5732
Post-election training/briefing for Members	[s.40]	X3256
Information & training for Members' staff	[s.40]	X5732
Liaison with political parties	Andrew Kennon	X3312
Information and results	Rob Clements	X3622
Reception and Chamber briefing	Andrew Kennon	X3312
Coordination of induction activities	[s.40]	X8370
GEPG Chair and overall coordination	Philippa Helme	X1706
GEPG support & administration	[s/40]	X0772 / X1705

ANNEX B: Outline timetable

Tues 6 Apr		Election announced
Thur 8 Apr		Parliament prorogued
Mon 12 Apr		Dissolution of Parliament
Tues 20 Apr		Nominations close
Mon 26 Apr		New Members reception area (NMRA) rehearsal 9.30am – 1.30pm
Tue 4 May		New Members reception area – final test 09.30am – 1.30pm (if necessary)
THUR 6 MAY	0	GENERAL ELECTION
Fri 7 May	+1	New Members reception area Media invited 11am – 12midday Open 12midday – 4pm
<i>Sat 8 May</i>		<i>Services for defeated Members staff available</i>
<i>Sun 9 May</i>		<i>Services for defeated Members staff available</i>
Mon 10 May	+2	New Members reception area open Open 8.30am – 8pm
		Party activity
Tue 11 May	+3	New Members reception area open Open 8.30am – 8pm
		Party activity
Wed 12 May	+4	New Members reception area open Open 8.30am – 8pm
		Chamber briefing 9.30 – 12.00midday

		Group photograph of all new MPs Westminster Hall 12.00midday (after briefing)
		Party activity
Thu 13 May	+5	New Members reception area open Open 8.30am – 8pm (hours may vary according to demand)
		Party activity
Fri 14 May	+6	New Members reception area Open 8.30am – 8pm (hours may vary according to demand)
<i>Sat 15 May</i>		
<i>Sun 16 May</i>		
Mon 17 May	+7	New Members reception area Open if required
w/c 17 May		Programme of briefings for new Members begin
TUE 18 MAY	+8	HOUSE MEETS TO ELECT SPEAKER
Wed 19 May	+9	Members swearing in
Thu 20 May	+10	Members swearing in
Fri 21 May	+11	Members swearing in
<i>Sat 22 May</i>		
<i>Sun 23 May</i>		
Mon 24 May	+12	Members swearing in (if required)
Tue 25 May	+13	State Opening

ANNEX C: DRAFT SCHEDULE OF BRIEFINGS

Talks and Presentations	Dates	Times	Speakers	Venue	Description of Talk
Parliamentary Standards and the registration and declaration of interests	Tues 11 May	2.15pm (for CONSERVATIVES ONLY)	John Lyon/ Alda Barry	Grand Committee Room	Talk will cover the requirements of the House in respect of the registration and declaration off interests.
	Mon 17 May	4.00pm	John Lyon/ Alda Barry	Atlee Suite or Room P (tbc)	
	Tues 18 May	10.00am (for LIB DEMS ONLY)	John Lyon/ Alda Barry	tbc	
	Tues 18 May	11.30am	John Lyon/ Alda Barry	CR 14 or room T (tbc)	

Making Friends with the Order Paper	Mon 17 May	5.00pm	[s.40]	Atlee Suite or Room P (tbc)	Find out why the Order Paper should be your best and constant friend! The papers published each sitting day provide comprehensive information on the business before the House and its committees that day and on future days. This presentation explains how to find what you are looking for quickly and easily, how to read the Order Paper, Future Business Papers, Notices of Motions and the Question Book effectively and includes a basic introduction to the tabling of items for consideration on future days.
	Wed 19 May	12 noon	[s.40]	Atlee Suite or Room S (tbc)	
Employing others: what you need to know	Tues 11 May	14.00 – 17.00 (FOR LIB DEMS ONLY – exact time tbc by their whips)	[s.40]	Grimond Room	The talk is a brief run through of MPs' responsibilities as employers and how the Personnel Advice Service (PAS) can help them. As small businesses MPs can be vulnerable when things go wrong. It will cover what the risks are and how to avoid them; appointments and contracts; how to make changes affecting employees; typical problems and how to handle them (sickness absence, underperformance, discipline etc); and the role of PAS.
	Tues 18 May	10.30am	[s.40]	CR 14 or room T (tbc)	
	Wed 19 May	11.00am	[s.40]	Atlee Suite or room S (tbc)	

Your law: opportunities for Private Members to introduce and take legislation through the HoC	Tues 18 May	4.00pm	[s.40]	Room T	This talk will take new Members through the different ways they can initiate legislation - presentation bills, the ballot and ten minute rule motions - with a practical focus on how to keep within the rules and an explanation of the assistance that can be provided by the Public Bill Office and others.
	Thurs 20 May	12 noon	[s.40]	Room S	
Who are PICT?	Tues 18 May	5.00pm	[s.40]	Room T	Meet the HoC Members Computing Officer and find out what ICT services are available both from within Parliament and outside Westminster.
	Tues 25 May	4.00pm	[s.40]	Room S	
ICT Security – protecting your ICT	Wed 19 May	10.00am	[s.40]	Room S	Meet the PICT security team who will outline some of the risks facing ICT and how best to protect your data.
	Tues 25 May	5.00pm	[s.40]	Room S	
Tabling Questions and	Mon 24 May	4.00pm	[s.40]	Atlee Suite or	A presentation on the practical and procedural

Motions: What a Members needs to know				Room S (tbc)	issues which Members and their staff should take into account when drafting and tabling Parliamentary Questions (PQs) and Early Day Motions (EDMs). Covers PQs for oral and written answer, EDMs, and amendments and added names to EDMs
	Wed 26 May	3.00pm	[s.40]	Atlee Suite or Room S (tbc)	
Freedom of Information: threat or opportunity? and Data Protection your constituents' interests	Mon 17 May	7.00pm (FOR LIB DEMS ONLY)	[s.40]	tbc	The talk be based on real issues and will not be a tour through the legislation. It will cover the impact of the Freedom Of Information Act 2000 on life in parliament; Freedom Of Information as a tool; the role of MP as 'Data Controller' under the Data Protection Act 1998; the steps Members can take to protect the interests of their constituents; likely challenges in relation to case work; and where to get help.
	Mon 24 May	5.00pm	[s.40]	Atlee suite or Room S (tbc)	
	Wed 26 May	4.00pm	[s.40]	Atlee Suite or Room s (tbc)	
Making your mark on legislation	Tues 8 June	10.30am	[s.40]	Room N	How bills go through the Commons, and how Members can scrutinise and amend them
	Wed 9 June	3.00pm	Simon Patrick (prob)	Room N	
Getting the Most out of	Tues 8 June	11.30am	[s.40]	Room N	The Department of Facilities manages your office

Parliamentary facilities			[s.40]		accommodation and provides venues for your meetings and events. This presentation will explain how we can deliver for you, your staff and your guests on the parliamentary estate
	Wed 9 June	4.00pm	[s.40]	Room N	
How Select Committees work	Mon 14 June	4.00pm	Paul Evans/ Crispin Poyser	Room S	This talk will look at the framework within which select committees (mainly departmental select committees) operate, what resources they have at their disposal, how Members might get the most out of them and ways in which they have tried to maximise their impact
	Tues 15 June	10.30am	Paul Evans/ Crispin Poyser	Room S	
Being well informed: Research and Information Services for Members	Mon 14 June	5.00pm	Bob Twigger/ Rob Clements	Room S	Members are expected to be well informed about a vast range of public policy matters: from social policy to international affairs and from planning law to the tax system. This session describes the services provided to Members and their staff by the House of Commons Library to help them to research a topic thoroughly or be an “instant expert”.
	Tues 15 June	11.30am	Bob Twigger/ Rob Clements	Room S	
A guide to Hansard for new	Tues 22 June	10.30am	[s.40]	Room S	This brief introduction covers the key practical

MPs			[s.40]		points relating to the transcription and publication of speeches made in Parliament by the Official Report. This includes publishing deadlines, making corrections and the terms of reference by which Hansard edits speeches.
	Wed 23 June	4.00pm	[s.40]	Room S	
Public Petitions: Getting your constituents' voices heard in the House	Tues 22 June	11.30am	[s.40]	Room S	Find out how petitions work, how to prepare and present a public petition on behalf of constituents, and what happens to petitions after they have been presented.
	Wed 23 June	3.00pm	[s.40]	Room S	
Privilege: Protecting freedom of speech in Parliament	Mon 28 June	4.00pm	Andrew Kennon	Room S	The few key points to know about what is protected by parliamentary privilege (and what is not)
	Wed 30 June	3.00pm	Andrew Kennon	Room S	
Parliament's Public	Mon 28 June	5.00pm	Aileen Walker/	Room S	Parliament has various services explaining the work,

Information Services: supporting Members			Rob Clements		role and relevance of Parliament to the public – the Education Service, the Information Office, Parliamentary Outreach, the parliamentary website, the Visitor Services team, and the Media and Communications Service. This session explains how the public information services can support Members and their staff (including constituency offices) in their work, and how members of the public can access these services.
	Wed 30 June	4.00pm	Aileen Walker/ Rob Clements	Room S	
Government expenditure – what influence do Members and Committees have?	Mon 5 July	5.00pm	[s.40]	CR14 or Room S (tbc)	The government budgetary and performance management system – Spending Reviews, Estimates and output targets. The session will examine the points at which Members engage in these systems, and what they can do to influence the results.
	Wed 7 July	4.00pm	[s.40]	Room S or CR14 (tbc)	
House of Commons Administration	Mon 12 July	4.00pm	Dorian Gerhold/Philipa Helme	Room S	An overview of the House Administration: role of the Commission and Member Committees; role of the Management Board, and structure and objectives of the House Service; who to go to: points of contact for Members.

Chamber conduct: a refresher	Mon 12 July	5.00pm	Andrew Kennon	Tbc	This talk will cover the same points made in the main Chamber briefing in the first week – from when to nod at the Chair to how to get an adjournment debate --.basic “do’s and don’ts” about taking part in questions and debates in the House – a few hints and suggestions – and where to get further advice.
	Wed 14 July	3.00pm	[s.40]	Room S	
Another place – the House of Lords	Wed 14 July	4.00pm	Lord Goldsmith/Jake Vaughan	Room S	Presentation on the work and membership of the Lords, including the House’s role in creating legislation, scrutinising the Government and debating public policy; and its membership, rules and practices.
What can the Commons do about Brussels?	Mon 19 July	4.00pm	[s.40]	Room S	Membership of the EU involves ceding some of parliament’s law-making powers to the European Institutions. National parliaments still have a role to play; some national parliaments mandate Ministers on positions they should take in the Council of Ministers; the House of Commons does not, it operates a scrutiny reserve instead. The presentation explains how the House scrutinises EU
	Thurs 22 July	12 noon	[s.40]	Room s	

					documents, how the scrutiny reserve works and how effective the Commons is in holding the Government to account on EU matters.
Devolution: Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland	Mon 19 July	5.00pm	[s.40]		An overview of devolved structures and administrations; which areas are devolved, which are not and how Westminster works with Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.
	Wed 21 July	4.00pm	[s.40]		