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## Management Board

### **A strategy for a converged digital parliamentary network**

*Paper from the Director of Parliamentary ICT*

#### **Purpose**

1. The aim of this paper is to present the management boards with a vision of how to deliver a digital network that meets the needs of a 21<sup>st</sup> century Parliament in an efficient and cost effective manner. The vision covers all services using a digital network and proposes a new converged network managed through one programme of work.
2. This paper asks the management board to agree a feasibility study to prepare a full business case for such a converged network to be considered by the management board in summer 2011. This feasibility study will take into account the works to be undertaken by PED required to secure the safety of the buildings and particularly of the Palace, and the proposed converged network will aim to facilitate delivery of such aggressive maintenance works in the future by replacing the current cabling bound in asbestos before such work is required.
3. This vision has been prepared jointly by PICT and Facilities department and is agreed with the heads of Hansard (digital audio network) and Broadcasting (broadcasting network).

#### **Actions for the Board**

4. The Board is asked:
  - To approve the vision and principle of a converged Parliamentary network set out in the paper
  - To approve the establishment of a programme to undertake a feasibility study to provide a programme of work to deliver the vision of a converged Parliamentary network, and to present a detailed business case for such a programme in summer 2011.

#### **Background**

5. Currently Parliament has many networks running under and over the Westminster estate. These networks form a spaghetti-like collection of cables and trunking, most of which run through the Palace, and in particular through basements, risers and attics where they pass through asbestos wrappers alongside other utilities. The wiring is historic and for the most part there are insufficient records to establish the routes of networks.
6. The services carried over these separate networks are core to supporting the work of Parliament, and include data (IT systems), voice (telephones), broadcasting,

Hansard audio recordings, division bells, annunciator services and the security services. Separate but parallel networks by and large are dedicated to individual systems and run over separate wires.

7. The permission to renew the Parliamentary data and voice networks managed by PICT has been approved in principle as part of the Infrastructure programme and indeed some switching work has already been completed and the feasibility study has commenced. Outline funding for future data and voice network approval sits in the central ICT financial forward plan and is awaiting the completion of a full business case for their renewal due in summer 2011.
8. The permission to renew the Hansard digital audio and Broadcasting networks are subject of a business case now under consideration by the Finance Directors.
9. The annunciator system is an amalgamation of services run by several departments and requires upgrade to digital standards in the near future.
10. The division bell is also a mix of services running over a very old analogue system subject to considerable disruption over the past year. The systems require investment and the network, which is currently uncharted, requires upgrade if this system is to reach required levels of resilience and performance. The management of the current system sits in several departments.
11. The security system is relatively new and runs on a separate network. It is likely to remain a requirement to keep this network separate from the main networks, but none the less can be managed in the same trunking or routing as other networks running across the estate.

## Next steps

12. If the management board approves the vision and feasibility study then it is proposed to establish a new converged network programme which will combine the previous work of the separate network programmes and deliver a plan and full business case for a converged network programme, to be considered by the management boards in summer 2011.
13. The sources of funding for the feasibility study for a converged network will come from a variety of sources, some already approved and part of the 11/12 financial estimate for the Commons and Lords. These include:
  - £243k in 10/11 and £754k in 11/12 from PICT's data and voice network programme, already included in the financial estimate for 11/12
  - Works feasibility study, included in the Works M&E provision and financial estimate for 11/12
  - A proportion of £980k, included in the business case from Hansard for Digital Audio and is a mixed provision for the SLIQ software implementation and a feasibility study for the network. It is not clear how this sits in the financial

estimate for 11/12 but the business case has been forwarded by the Finance Directors with a recommendation for approval.

- An additional sum, estimated to be less than £200k, to undertake cabling and server room work by PED for Hansard digital audio service, understood to be available from minor works budgets.
- £120K feasibility proposal requested by the broadcasting business case presented by Broadcast services for a new Commons and Lords TV control room

14. It is proposed to establish a converged network programme board with representatives from PICT, Facilities Department, Hansard and Broadcasting to prepare detail plans and combined budget forecast. This board would benefit from a Finance representative.

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3 December 2010