

**Minutes of the Management Board meeting
held on Thursday 17 February 2011**

Those present: Malcolm Jack (Chief Executive) (Chairman)
Robert Rogers (Director General of Chamber and
Committee Services)
John Borley (Director General of Facilities)
John Pullinger (Director General of Information Services)
Andrew Walker (Director General of Resources)
Joan Miller (Director of PICT, external member)
Alex Jablonowski (external member)

In attendance: Matthew Hamlyn (Board Secretary)
[s.40] (Assistant Secretary)
Elizabeth Honer (Director of Savings, Resources, for
item 5)
[s.40] (Strategy, Planning and Performance Co-ordinator,
OCE, for item 6)
Bob Twigger (Director of Information Services for
Members, DIS, for item 7)

1. Matters arising from previous meetings

1.1. Further to action 5 (longer term planning of Board business) **Matthew Hamlyn** said he was grateful to Board members who had already come forward with future items. DGs had also proposed items for single-issue meetings. Action 7 (GEPG) was outstanding, but relevant to the agenda item on Survey of Services to Members.

1.2. Further to item 8 (feedback from the trial run of proactive publication of Board papers), **Matthew Hamlyn** reported that the arrangements had worked, although authors of Board papers would need to get used to marking up their papers accordingly. The publication of past Management Board papers in response to an FoI request was now complete. It had been a very large task and had been well managed.

2. CPA Conference

2.1. The **Chairman** proposed that agenda item 7 be taken.

2.2. The Board agreed:

- that Commons and PICT staff could volunteer as conference assistants for the Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference 2011; and
- that volunteers should be offered a day off in lieu for each day worked at the weekend.

3. Risk and performance

3.1. The Board considered staff morale. In discussion the following points were made:

- D-Facilities and DCCS had noticed falling numbers of volunteers for events/additional responsibilities.
- Low numbers of volunteers might be a reflection of workload rather than morale.
- Staff who had met the Clerk as part of the visibility programme had told him they had been motivated by participating in interdepartmental projects.
- Levels of enthusiasm were high in PICT. There were signs that PICT staff were enjoying working with other departments and were feeling valued.
- Low morale was for managers to manage but could become a real risk if it was endemic and long term. That was definitely not the case across the House overall. The Board could damage staff morale if it were to overplay concerns.
- The House could help maintain staff morale by managing the savings process carefully and giving staff a clear idea of where the organisation was headed. That direction first needed to be agreed with politicians.
- The House was a very good place to work, probably the best in the public sector. It was important for senior managers to share that message with their staff.
- Sickness absence was a good indicator of morale and should continue to be monitored. The rates were currently quite good.
- The impact of the Voluntary Exit Scheme on unsuccessful applicants needed to be carefully managed and was a key concern of the team leading the scheme. Local managers needed to ensure those who remained understood that they were highly valued by the House. D-Resources would provide advice to managers and ensure information was shared between departments.
- The next phase of the savings programme was an opportunity to enthuse staff. The title, savings programme, did not capture the intention of focusing on making the House Service more effective.

3.2. **Andrew Walker** updated the Board on the latest Administration Estimate outturn. The forecast overspend had reduced to £0.5 million, supporting the Board's decision not to ask for a Supplementary Estimate.

[s.36(2)(b)] and [s.36(2)(c)]

3.3. **Alex Jablonowski and Robert Rogers** asked why the respect policy had not been published. **Andrew Walker** explained that the delay was

due in part to a staff bereavement. An interim scheme would be launched in the next couple of days via an Ask the Management Board answer. A working group and a project timetable were also in place for the final scheme. It was hoped that the final scheme could be announced in May, although that depended on agreement with all the parties. **Robert Rogers** asked whether the timetable for the formal scheme could be shortened. **Andrew Walker** said that it would take time to get political agreement. The unions also needed to be kept informed. **Robert Rogers** suggested that the working group should include a lawyer.

3.4. The Board agreed:

- that the interim scheme should be publicised within the next couple of days, including through departmental staff bulletins;
- that there should be a legal representative on the working group on the final scheme.

3.5. *Action: Andrew Walker to ensure interim scheme on complaints against Members is published and to give DGs wording for use in their next staff bulletins by 21 February.*

4. Oral updates from Directors General

4.1. **Andrew Walker** informed the Board that pay negotiations for bands A to E and Catering and Retail Pay had now started.

4.2. The Board considered proposed nominees for the non-consolidated awards sub-committee.

4.3. **Andrew Walker** told the Board that an FoI request had been received asking for details of their expenses, and that he would be checking details with Board members.

4.4. **Joan Miller** told the Board that Steve O'Connor had been appointed as PICT Director of Technology to backfill while Innis Montgomery was leading the converged network feasibility study.

4.5. [s.36(2)(b)] and [s.36(2)(c); s.34]

4.6. **Robert Rogers** said that Number 10 had decided to pilot a public reading stage via a website it had set up for the Protection of Freedoms Bill. It was exclusively a Government initiative, although Sir George Young had said in Business Questions that he hoped the House would take ownership of a proper public reading stage in future.

4.7. **Robert Rogers** asked whether it would be possible to inform staff affected by FoI requests as soon as the request started to be processed.

Andrew Walker said that that approach had been considered, but there were complications, which made handling more difficult.

4.8. John Borley reported that the Readiness for Service Gateway Review of the Offsite Consolidation Centre had provided helpful advice. The Review team was entirely confident of delivery, although some aspects of preparation had led to an overall assessment of amber.

4.9. John Pullinger reported that his visit to the Iraqi parliament to assist with planning induction for new Members had been very worthwhile. He also informed the Board that the PICT healthcheck had now been commissioned and that DGs would be interviewed as part of that process.

4.10. [s.36(2)(b)] and [s.36(2)(c)]

4.11. Alex Jablonowski briefed the Board on the Audit Committees' meetings in January.

4.12. Andrew Walker reported that the Commission had taken a decision on the form of the Administration Estimate at its meeting on 14 February.

5. Savings Programme

5.1. The Board considered the informal meeting held with the Finance and Services Committee earlier in the day. In discussion the following points were made:

- The meeting had been very positive and constructive.
- The emphasis had been on making the House of Commons more effective at less cost. Areas of greatest potential had been discussed and seven workstreams had now emerged.
- The Board needed to highlight the fact that it would continue to question the need for, and the value for money of, all services as part of the annual budget planning process.
- Members had raised the need for a communications strategy. The Committee had also acknowledged that it needed to stand behind any final proposals and promote them with their colleagues, in order to get buy-in from Members more widely.
- The Committee had demonstrated an appetite for tougher financial challenge. For instance, Members had suggested that procedural changes should be made to ensure the House properly took into account the costs of major initiatives, like new select committees, before agreeing to them.
- Early engagement with the House of Lords on the proposed workstreams would be important.
- Members had accepted that in some areas investment might be needed in order to make savings.

- The savings programme would consider the best form of governance of the workstreams to ensure all interdependencies were managed, while ensuring that reporting did not become too complex. The portfolio function in the new Department of Human Resources and Change would help with that in future.
- The Board should seek expert advice on a pro bono basis.

5.2. The Board agreed that:

- Elizabeth Honer should draft a paper for the Finance and Services Committee to present to the Commission setting out the agreed workstreams.
- Board members should produce terms of reference for their lead workstreams, which would be included as an annex to the paper.
- The terms of reference should be produced after consultation with Lords counterparts and should cover all major areas being considered.
- Specimen terms of reference should be circulated to the Board to ensure consistency.

5.3. *Action: Elizabeth Honer to draft paper for the Finance and Services Committee to be agreed by the Board by correspondence before the next meeting of the Committee. Elizabeth Honer to work with John Borley to draw up his terms of reference and circulate them to the Board as a model to follow by 22 February. Remaining Board members to produce draft terms of reference for their lead workstreams by 1 March.*

5.4. The Board considered the Accommodation/Estate and Income Generation paper. In discussion the following points were made:

- The paper covered two of the workstreams which had emerged in the meeting with the Finance and Services Committee.
- Accommodation should not be the driver of changes to working practices.
- The net contribution of income generation activities was unlikely to be greatly significant. It was a low margin business and the House had limited capacity. That should be set out in the paper to the Commission.
- The accommodation/estate strand should also include work to consider more efficient utilisation of space. Some office space was held but rarely used.
- It might be difficult to get agreement from Member committees before the summer recess. The last meeting of the Commission before the summer was on 11 July.
- October would be too late. The budget for 2012/13 needed to be decided by Christmas. Members had to be given enough time to consider costed options.

5.5. The Board agreed:

- that the accommodation/estate strand should examine (i) options for contracting the size of the estate, (ii) more economical ways of

- providing services that support the estate and its occupants, and (iii) incentives for more efficient use of space;
- that it should, in particular, consider developing options for a multi-function support contract; and brief the Finance and Services Committee of that intention;
 - that the work on accommodation/estate should be overseen by the Facilities Transformation Board (possibly with revised membership) reporting into the Savings Programme Board.
 - that the income generation strand should examine: merchandising; tours/events organised by the House; income from third party occupants of the Estate; events organised by others; banqueting; fundraising and sponsorship; and information/talks.
 - that various options for managing income generation should be explored, including the establishment of a special purpose, not for profit vehicle.
 - that an unpaid advisory group on income generation should be convened
 - that costed options relating to both of those strands should be brought back to the Management Board by the summer recess and Member committees for consideration in early September and that both the Board and Member committees should be consulted as work progressed over the intervening months.

5.6. The Board considered the Print to Web paper. In discussion the following points were made:

- The paper covered one of the workstreams which had emerged in the meeting with the Finance and Services Committee.
- [s.43]
- The Board should consider going paperless to set an example.
- The terms of reference of the workstream should make it clear that the aim was to discourage printing from the web.

5.7. The Board agreed:

- that work should continue on identification of savings and service enhancements which could be achieved by web-only publication;
- the Printing and Publishing Management Group (PPMG) should initiate a rapid mapping exercise of the half-dozen principal classes of documents currently printed to identify costs, volumes, internal and external users, distribution, web presence, etc. That exercise should also seek ways of finding out preferences on delivery directly from key users.
- the PPMG should convene a small Print to Web group — including the Lords, if they agreed — to draw up a vision for a future service, along with the underlying principles, for Board agreement. That vision should draw on existing Web and Intranet Service and Procedural Data Programme vision papers, and should at least address the aspiration of electronic publication as the prime means of publication.

- that once the vision had been agreed, a business case should be developed assessing the costs and benefits of delivery of the vision. If required at that time, a detailed commercial assessment should be prepared for the Board of the issues and costs involved in any suggestion that the TSO contract be radically altered before its agreed end date in 2016.
- the Savings Programme Board had a role in that work along with other strands of the savings programme. As with the other strands, that work should report into the Savings Programme Board to ensure the Commission's savings target was met.

6. Strategic and business planning and risk

6.1. The Board considered the draft Interim Strategic Plan and draft Corporate Business Plan. In discussion the following points were made:

- Departments did not want the strategic goals to change, as they were already being used in departmental plans, including to cascade down to job descriptions.
- Maintaining the Parliamentary Estate sat rather awkwardly in the current strategic goals.
- Strategic and business planning should be kept as simple as possible so that staff could follow it.
- More work was needed in the workstreams identified by the Finance and Services Committee before the strategic plan could be fleshed out further.

6.2. The Board agreed:

- to postpone work on the strategic plan until later in the year, by which time the scope and direction of the next phase of the Savings Programme would be clearer;
- that the priority was to finalise the Corporate Business Plan for 2011/12, which needed to be approved by the Commission before the end of March and published ready for the start of the new financial year.

6.3. *Action: OCE to update the draft Corporate Business Plan and circulate to BMDs/business managers and Board members by 23 February for contributions and comment by 4 March. Final version to be circulated on 8 March for discussion by Board on 10 March, ready for circulation to Commission on 14 March.*

6.4. The Board considered the Risk Management paper. It agreed the new board level risks, with the following amendments:

- Board level risks should be owned by the Board, so Board members would be risk leads rather than risk owners.

- Terrorism should be owned or managed as part of the wider security risk, only coming to the Board when required.
- The Chairman should be the Board lead on staff morale.
- Finance and HR capability should not be board level risks. The capability risk should relate to the House Service not having the right capability to deliver change and its “business as usual”, and that risk should be led by Andrew Walker.

6.5. The Board agreed the proposed delegation of the current corporate risks to departments, with the following amendments:

- Risk 3b should relate to disruption as a result of a failure to identify and secure appropriate IT resource to meet business needs and should be on each department’s risk register.
- Risk 6 should be dropped altogether as it related to normal risk in projects.
- Risk 9 should be owned by whoever was appointed as champion of Members’ services.
- Risk 10 should be drafted to make it clear it was an information security risk and it should be owned by D-HR&C, or dropped altogether if a similar risk already existed.

7. Survey of Services to Members

7.1. The Board considered the results of the 2010 Members’ Survey of Services. In discussion the following points were made:

- The results were generally encouraging.
- The next survey should test some of the proposals in the savings programme.
 - Smaller scale quarterly surveys would give clearer information and help show trends. However, Member committees had in the past wanted all Members to be given the opportunity to respond.
 - It would be easier to reconsider the form of the survey once the current contract had expired.
 - It would be helpful for the Board to receive the survey results earlier.
- Members’ response rates were under a third, despite significant efforts to publicise the survey.
 - The Finance and Services Committee should in future be asked to encourage Members to complete the survey, if it related to savings issues.
 - Verbatim comments should not be published, as Members had not been warned in advance that their comments could be made public.

7.2. The Board agreed:

- that the full report, excluding verbatim comments, should be published on the Parliament website and Parliamentary Intranet;

- that an article should be produced for CAPS News on the outcomes of the survey;
- that FDS should be asked to conduct a third survey in October 2011, as part of the contractual agreement signed with them in 2008, and that the survey should be used to test some elements of the savings programme;
- that the Board should receive provisional results by the end of November, and that the questionnaire should be shortened to encourage greater response; and
- that following the next survey, a full review should be taken to determine the best way of seeking Members' views on House services.

7.3. *Action: Bob Twigger to draft article on results of Members' survey for next edition of CAPS news. OCE to ensure full report of survey, minus verbatim comments, is published on intranet and internet.*

8. Any Other Business

8.1. Robert Rogers said that he had been invited to speak to the Liaison Committee on 3 March.

8.2. Matthew Hamlyn reminded the Board that the OCE would publish the Board papers for the meeting and for January's meeting with the minutes of the 17 February Board.

[adjourned at 18.30

Matthew Hamlyn
Secretary

Malcolm Jack
Chairman

February 2010