HOUSE OF LORDS

Management Board

Joint Meeting of the House of Lords Management Board and
House of Commons Executive Committee

12th Meeting
20 November 2015

MINUTES

Present:	David Beamish	Clerk of the Parliaments
	Simon Burton	Corporate Services, House of Lords
	Elizabeth Hallam Smith	Information Services, House of Lords
	Liz Hewitt	Audit Committee member
	Rob Greig	Digital Service
	David Leakey	Access and Security, House of Lords
	Andrew Makower	Financial Resources, House of Lords
	Tom Mohan	Human Resources, House of Lords
	Edward Ollard	Parliamentary Services, House of Lords
	Carl Woodall	Facilities, House of Lords
	Ian Ailles	Director General of the House of Commons
	Myfanwy Barrett	Finance, House of Commons
	John Benger	Chamber and Committee Services, House of Commons
	John Borley	Facilities, House of Commons
	David Natzler	Clerk of the House of Commons
	Andrew Walker	Human Resources and Change, House of Commons
	Penny Young	Information Services, House of Commons
In attendance:	Tracy Green	Head of Strategy, Digital Service

David Beamish took the chair.

1 Introductory discussion with the Director General of the House of Commons

1.1 **Ian Ailles** shared some observations from his first few weeks' employment at the House of Commons.

1.2 He gave an overview of his Director General's Review, which would consider the senior management and wider organisational structure of the House of Commons, the number of internal boards and groups and programme and project management, with the aim of presenting recommendations to the House of Commons Commission in April 2016.

2 Investment Planning round 2016-17 to 2019-20

2.1 **Myfanwy Barrett** presented the Medium-Term Investment Plan (MTIP), highlighting that:

- It was a transitional year for investment planning;
- Initial work undertaken in the summer had been handed over to the Joint Investment Board in the autumn;
- For the first time, it had been possible to make decisions across the digital and estates portfolios;

- The Joint Investment Board had decided to commission work to review capacity and capability to deliver the expanding investment activity;
- Allocations were fixed for 2016/17 with some initiatives deferred to future years; and
- The MTIP would go to members of both Houses in December 2015 and would eventually be published.

2.2 **Andrew Makower** advised that the House Committee was content with the figures in the MTIP.

2.3 The Board and Executive Committee considered the paper and the following points were raised in discussion:
- There was strong support for the capability and capacity review.
- It was confirmed that the review would be jointly commissioned and supervised.
- If the review concluded that it was impossible to deliver the investment on the scale suggested, it would be possible to reduce the MTIP, either before the Final Estimate was laid, or via a Supplementary Estimate.
- Concern was expressed about the capacity and capability of departments across both Houses to manage the volume of anticipated change, alongside the various MTIP programmes and in the context of physical upheaval.
- The work presented a huge opportunity for staff development but also a number of recruitment challenges.
- It was important to bear in mind initiative fatigue and ensure that emerging good practice was not lost.
- Individual MTIP project owners were advised to give careful consideration to the business case, value for money appraisal, expenditure triggers, and oversight arrangements.
- In relation to digital investment, the importance of lifecycle management was highlighted and it was noted that a benchmarking exercise with six other parliaments had found that the UK Parliament had the lowest digital spend per user and per device.
- In relation to estates investment, it would be important to engage Commons members on the archives programme, given that, although it is currently treated as a Lords programme, there was clearly a joint interest. A paper would be presented the Board and Executive Committee in January 2016.

2.4 The Board and Executive Committee **agreed** to:
- Note the advice of the Joint Investment Board;
- Approve the Medium-Term Investment Plan;
- Note that further work will be done prior to April 2016 to finalise allocations to individual programmes and projects within the sub-portfolios; and
- Note the decision of the Joint Investment Board to commission a review of capability and capacity.

2.5 In relation to the capability and capacity review, the Board and Executive Committee **agreed** that:
- Ian Ailles would own the review as Chair of the Joint Investment Board;
- The scoping note should be revised to clarify a) oversight arrangements and b) that Stage 3 of the review would include consideration of the impact on legal and HR support processes; and
- The National Audit Office should be invited to review the scoping note informally.

Ian Ailles took the chair.

3   A Digital Strategy for Parliament 2015-2020

3.1. **Rob Greig** delivered a presentation. He noted that as digital became a less distinct domain or objective for the business a digital strategy distinct from an organisational strategy would no longer be necessary. The digital strategy was still in a draft form and would change as a result of feedback through an iterative and collaborative approach. The final version would be a strategy for Parliament as a whole, which was aligned with each House's objectives, rather than just for the Digital Service. A joint meeting of the Commons Administration Committee and Lords Information Committee would be invited to endorse the strategy in early March 2016. Thereafter the Digital Strategy Board would be responsible for monitoring the strategy to ensure that it remained live and relevant. He had not mentioned the ongoing infrastructure and cyber security work as this was a given, while the strategy was about adding value. He provided an overview of Generations X, Y and Z and emphasised that digital in Parliament needed to continue being relevant.

3.2. **Tracy Green** delivered a presentation. She noted that Parliament was not immune from digital changes across the world, which it could take advantage of to support Parliament's work more effectively. Digital should run through everything that Parliament did and it was important for the strategy to deliver rather than being a document which sat on the shelf. Exemplars would be delivered by the end of March 2016 to demonstrate the tangible benefits of the strategy. The strategy was about change and would also itself change over time as digital issues developed further. She provided an overview of the digital vision's aspirations and principles, as well as the timeline for the development of the digital strategy. She noted that member engagement had begun and the Commons Administration Committee and Lords Information Committee would be consulted on the draft strategy in late November and early December 2015.

3.3. The Board and Executive Committee considered the paper and the following points were raised in discussion:
- The draft strategy was welcomed.
- It was considered that the strategy was too focused on technology and was not yet in the right form for sharing with members. Achieving a consistent design in the new website was desirable to an extent but it was important for both Houses to retain their brand identities. The themes suggested by Genevieve Shore at the Digital Strategy Board meeting on 23 October 2015 would provide a better approach for presenting the strategy to members and the public. Exemplars would also be welcome as a way of demonstrating tangible outcomes.
- It was considered that the strategy did not emphasise security enough, which needed to be acknowledged before being driven forward.
- It was considered that the strategy was evolving and improving each time. It was noted that security was rightly the first word in the strategy and this needed to be addressed before the ambitions in the strategy could be realised. The draft strategy was also considered to be too long and that the "feels like" column might require a reality check as it was in danger of over-promising. It was considered that the commitment to blogging by staff should not be included in the strategic actions column. The suggestion that the strategy might change in six months might undermine its strategic purpose so a five-year period might be more appropriate.
- The "feels like" content of the strategy was welcomed and the overall aspirational approach. There was confidence in the leadership to deliver it. However, it was noted that the Digital Service was dealing with a turnaround situation, which made it more difficult for the business to realise its strategic aims. The approach advocated by Genevieve Shore during the Digital Strategy Board's discussion was also endorsed and it was felt that this element needed to be

surfaced more. It was noted that the delivery of the strategy would overlap with Restoration & Renewal and that people were becoming understandably frustrated about making progress. In that respect it was important for the difficulties to be recognised at the outset in order to increase credibility in this area.

- It was noted that the development of a strategy was a difficult process and the level of engagement that had taken place so far was therefore admiral. It was important to distinguish the givens such as infrastructure, which would have to be addressed by the turnaround, from delivering the benefits of the strategy, which would add value. Examining where systems could be standardised might also yield benefits. The "feels like" column provided a good platform for building KPIs for a service organisation.

- With regard to the length of the draft strategy, it was noted that the first two columns of the paper constituted the core of the strategy, with the remainder of the paper providing supporting material.

- **Rob Greig** acknowledged the security point and requested views from the Board and Committee regarding the approach to member engagement.

- It was suggested that providing comparative analysis about the approach of other organisations would be useful in this regard and it was noted that member committees did not appreciate being presented with documents to endorse as a *fait accompli*.

3.4. The Board and Committee **took note** of the progress made to date on the development of the digital strategy including the plan for completion and final sign off.

3.5. **Rob Greig** noted the importance of getting customer service levels right at the outset. He had already emphasised these points to different offices in the House of Lords and would also welcome the opportunity to do the same in other offices/departments across Parliament.

4   Any Other Business

4.1 **David Natzler** noted that efforts were being taken to establish joined up Commons Member engagement with Restoration & Renewal and the Northern Estate Programme, which Lords colleagues might also find beneficial. He and **John Borley** provided an update about possible decants and office moves across the Commons part of the Parliamentary estate.

4.2 **David Beamish** provided the Committee with an update on the work of the Leader's Group on the Governance of the House of Lords.

4.3 **David Leakey** noted the visit by the Incident Management Framework golds and silvers to Lambeth later that day.

Next Meeting: Wednesday 2 December at 10.00am

Secretary to the Management Board
20 November 2015