



# HOUSE OF LORDS

## Management Board

2nd Meeting  
Friday 4 March 2016

### MINUTES

<b>Present:</b>	David Beamish	Chairman
	Simon Burton	Corporate Services
	Rob Greig	Digital Services
	Elizabeth Hallam Smith	Information Services
	David Leakey	Access
	Andrew Makower	Financial Resources
	Tom Mohan	Human Resources
	Edward Ollard	Parliamentary Services
	Carl Woodall	Support Services

**Apologies:** Liz Hewitt

The Chairman provided oral updates on State Opening, the implementation of the Leader's Group on Governance recommendations and the election of a new Lord Speaker.

The Chairman noted that Ian Ailles would attend the next meeting to brief the Board on the Director General's Review.

## I Revision of the House of Lords Strategy

**MB/2016/9**

1.1 Simon Burton introduced the paper and emphasised that the development of the new strategy was work in progress. He invited the Board to consider, in particular, what the strategic priorities should be, and how and when members should be consulted.

1.2 The Board considered the paper and the following points were raised in discussion:

- The Chairman suggested that members should be consulted on a draft version of the strategy at an early stage, in advance of being invited to agree the final version.
- The Director of Information Services welcomed the first draft, including its brevity, themes and focus on the challenges. How performance would be measured and what success looked like should also be determined at this stage and reflected in the wording of the priorities. Members of her team had [*Additional information – Restricted Access*] suggested placing more emphasis on accessibility and inclusion. Some of the challenges for the Lords would be similar to the Commons but others would be distinct, including how to ensure that the Commons took account of Lords views. The information management and external/internal communications content of the Commons strategy should be echoed in the Lords strategy. She endorsed the Commons strategy's focus on customer service standards and feedback loops. With reference to the

public engagement objective in the Commons strategy, a similar approach would be more problematic for Lords [*Additional information – Restricted Access*]. In any event, the Lord Speaker's involvement in this area was important, as was greater input from Commons Information Services, which had already improved significantly. She did not consider that Restoration and Renewal (R&R) received enough prominence in either strategy as its impact would be significant over the next five years. R&R would present both Houses with an opportunity to improve services to members and the public. She felt that both strategies should make more explicit reference to the public's attachment to the heritage value of parliament, including the administrations' roles as 'wise custodians'.

- Carl Woodall welcomed the draft strategy. He agreed with the focus on customer service in the Commons strategy which should be replicated in the Lords strategy. He preferred the first strategic aim option which should refer to both the House and its members but without the reference to 'as part of Parliament'. The list of priorities should not include projects/programmes, such as the Efficiencies and Archives Accommodation Programmes, which were being delivered as part of core services. He did not agree with the adoption of a CSR policy. The suggested priorities referring to works projects and R&R should be combined. Improving governance should be taken as read and not included as a priority. The priorities should include references to the digital strategy, diversity and inclusion, improve understanding of members and staff, and implementing Lords governance changes. Wide consultation of staff on the new strategy was important in order to secure buy-in, as well as using it to improve engagement with staff more generally.
- The Chairman also disagreed with the suggested adoption of a CSR policy. He also said that the strategy should be explicit that its content did not reflect all of the Administration's activities and that BAU activities, as well as others, would be ongoing.
- The Director of Human Resources welcomed the shortness of the draft strategy but considered that the summary sheet should include fewer layers, as well as removing the references to the People Business Plan and financial remit. He preferred the layout of the Commons strategy, including the smaller number of layers and references to how objectives would be implemented and measured. He suggested referring to it as a plan rather than a strategy and queried the inclusion of a time period in the heading. Regarding the suggested strategic aims the use of the word 'enable' suggested that the House was not yet functioning effectively, which was not the case. The aim should describe what would be different in five years' time and what success would look like. With reference to the Commons strategic aim he suggested an alternative Lords aim of 'to support and strengthen the second chamber of parliament' or 'to play our part in developing a parliament fit for the 21st century'. Proceeding in step with the Commons in this area was desirable but should also be extended to the government, in light of its likely future expenditure on R&R.

- The Director of the Digital Service welcomed the layout of the draft strategy but agreed that it should contain fewer layers. Its alignment with the Commons and digital strategies was also welcome but the aim could be more ambitious as it needed to motivate and energise people. More emphasis on digital matters would also be welcome rather than simply a cross-reference to the digital strategy. The Board noted that the reference to ‘maximise the potential of digital tools’ featured in both strategies. He had encouraged the Commons to refer to the Lords as a partner in its strategy and considered that this gesture should be reciprocated in the Lords strategy. He also emphasised that the Lords should be mindful of structural changes taking place in the Commons and Digital Service.
- Black Rod preferred the first strategic aim option but suggested replacing ‘enable’ and ‘ensure’ with ‘strengthen’ as a more robust verb. The aim should encapsulate the unifying purpose of strategy. Regarding the priorities he agreed that the core business activities should not be included in the list, which would preferably only contain three or four priorities for change.
- The Finance Director welcomed the structure of the strategy and most of the content. There was value in seeking alignment with the Commons and consideration needed to be given to how the Lords strategy would be read in the Commons. He welcomed the reference in the new Commons strategy to working effectively with the Lords and consulting them, as a matter of routine, on decisions that would affect them. This was the reason for the current reference to Parliament in the aim. It had been suggested that staff should be consulted on the aim. The strategy should form part of the Administration’s corporate governance tool kit, and should focus on priorities and choices. The Lords strategy should remain reasonably consistent and only be changed for a reason. A consistent set of values was also desirable. The final set of priorities for change, which purposely did not refer to BAU activities, should be a reasonably short list, maybe no more than 10. He emphasised that the strategy should house the financial remit and the Chairman agreed.
- The Clerk Assistant [*Additional information – Restricted Access*]. He agreed that too many of the suggested priorities referred to BAU activities, which should not be included in the final list. [*Additional information – Restricted Access*]. He asked if the suggested strategic tasks could be appropriately characterised as approaches.

1.3 The Reading Clerk thanked the Board for their feedback and said that the Business Planning Group would develop the strategy further, including consideration of its overall purpose and consulting staff further on the aim, with the intention of making it more aspirational and visionary.

1.4 The Board **took note** of the draft strategy and invited the Business Planning Group to take account of its discussion in preparing the next draft, which would be considered by the Board in due course.

## 2 Any Other Business

2.1 The Director of Human Resources provided an oral update about the pay offer.

**3 Minutes of the meeting on 10 February 2016**

3.1 The minutes had been previously agreed by correspondence.

**Next Meeting:** Wednesday 9 March 2016 at 10.00am

Management Board Secretary  
7 March 2016

**ACTIONS**

<b>Meeting date</b>	<b>Minute item</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Owner</b>	<b>Deadline/ Status</b>
4 March	1.4	Business Planning Group to develop draft Lords strategy further and revert to the Board.	SPB	April