

**Minutes of the Executive Committee meeting
held on Thursday 11 February 2016**

Those present: Ian Ailles (Director General) (Chair)
David Natzler (Clerk of the House)
Myfanwy Barrett (Director of Finance)
John Bengner
John Borley CB (DG Facilities)
Rob Greig (Director of the Parliamentary Digital Service)
Penny Young (Librarian and DG, Department of Information Services)
Andrew Walker (DG HR & Change)

In attendance: Marianne Cwynarski, Secretary
Sarah Petit, Assistant Secretary
Tom Goldsmith, Head of the Governance Office
Caroline Shenton (for item 5)

1. Matters arising from previous meetings

- 1.1 **The Committee Secretary** advised that she was in discussion with the Communications team to ensure that the message to staff welcoming the improved performance on IPR completion was timed to support rather than discourage future compliance. **Andrew Walker** suggested that she also liaise with the DHRC communications team. **(Action: Committee Secretary)**
- 1.2 **Andrew Walker** informed the Committee that the risk of gaps in appointment and changes to the Executive Committee composition impacting on the achievement of the House Service's objectives had been removed. The staff morale risk would be re-assessed and reported back to the Committee at the next Quarterly Performance Review in April.
- 1.3 **Rob Greig** advised that his paper on cyber security had been agreed at the joint meeting of the Commons Commission and the Lords House Committee.
- 1.4 **The Assistant Secretary** gave an update on proposals for the House Service to commemorate Shakespeare 400.
- 1.5 **The Chair** advised that a board paper would be prepared on the refurbishment Canon Row.

2. Archive Accommodation Programme

- 2.1 **Caroline Shenton** introduced the paper, which outlined options for the relocation of the Parliamentary Archives and its services, the decisions to be made on ownership of any future Archives building and the approval route on the preferred way forward. She gave feedback from the discussion at the Lords Management Board meeting the previous day.

2.2 The Committee discussed the paper and the following points were made:

- The programme has good public engagement potential, which should be a factor in the final decision on the location of the Archive.
- There was support in principle for sharing the cost of any new building with the House of Lords, but further information was sought in relation to the issue of joint ownership.
- There will be public interest in the decision and potentially some opportunity to involve the public in the deliberations.

2.3 The Committee **agreed**:

- That both Houses should share the ownership and cost of any new Archives building at a ratio of 60:40 Lords:Commons;
- The proposed approval process for the Outline Business Case, subject to an amendment that the Commission and House Committee should be asked for separate decision, before a joint meeting, and a revised timetable to postpone consideration of the Outline Business Case until after a decision has been taken on Restoration and Renewal of the Palace of Westminster.

3. Strategy for the House of Commons Service 2016-21

3.1 **The Assistant Secretary** introduced the draft strategy.

3.2 The Committee discussed the paper and **agreed**:

- The draft strategy for the House Service for 2016-21, subject to the revisions proposed at the meeting, to put to the Commission for approval in March;
- To share the strategy with all staff, once it had been approved by the Commission;
- To align secondary strategies to the corporate strategy, once approved by the Commission; and
- To produce a provisional corporate business plan for 2016/17 on the basis of the strategy, by the end of April.

4. Efficiencies

4.1 **Myfanwy Barrett** introduced the paper and gave feedback from the discussion at the Lords Management Board meeting the previous day.

4.2 The Committee discussed the paper and the following points were made:

- That the efficiencies programme was a condition set by the Commission for maintaining the financial remit for 2016/17;

- That lessons had been learnt from the previous savings programme, including the positive lesson that it was a successful programme which delivered the clear objectives set for it, and that having a target helped to achieve this; and
- That it would release funds for investment in strategic priorities.

4.3 Further to the decision in December to proceed with the bi-cameral Efficiencies Programme, the Committee:

- **Agreed** the objectives of the Programme, as follows:
 - To free up resources to deliver priorities
 - To be prepared if the Commission or House Committee opts for a tighter remit in future
 - To tackle perceived inefficiencies in our ways of working and delivery of services/projects;
- **Noted** the emerging content of the programme;
- **Agreed** the governance and management arrangements of the programme;
- **Agreed** the Commons target of £15.5m, being 10% of controllable expenditure; and
- **Agreed** the paper for onward circulation to the Finance Committee, subject to a clarification that an efficiencies programme was a condition of the pay remit set by the Commission for 2016/17. **(Action: Myfanwy Barrett)**

5. **SCS Pay: Option for Moving to IPR Reporting Form in April 2016**

5.1 **Andrew Walker** introduced the paper, which outlined the benefits and disadvantages of early introduction of the IPR Reporting Form for SCS staff and the recommendation of the Pay Steering Group that there was a stronger case for waiting until April 2017, as per the original timetable.

5.2 The Committee **agreed** to endorse the recommendation of the Pay Steering Group.

6. **Workplace investment opportunities: 7MB**

6.1 **John Borley** introduced the paper, which summarised options to improve working conditions for staff in 7 Millbank.

6.2 The Committee discussed the paper and agreed the proposals in the paper, subject to:

- Removal of the proposal to carry out work in the former 6th floor café area;
- Additional scoping of work to improve ventilation;
- Additional proposal to explore effective commercial remedies around lift performance in the building refurbishment and lease extension project; and
- Asking staff for any further suggestions.

(Action: John Borley)

7. Palace of Westminster: Life Safety Compliance

- 7.1 **John Borley** introduced the paper, which outlined the fire safety obligations on the House and the current level of compliance with those obligations. He advised that a meeting held on 28 January between the Responsible Persons, various officials and two external members of the Fire Safety Committee, had concluded that the remaining Palace Fire Safety Improvement Works Programme should proceed as far as was practicable on the original timetable, considering the decant and disturbance that its full scope would entail.
- 7.2 The Committee **noted** the obligations on the House and the current level of compliance; and that a separate paper detailing progress on the Fire Safety Improvement Works Programme would be submitted to the next formal meeting of the Committee in March 2016. The Committee requested that the legal advice on corporate manslaughter should be included in the full paper to be circulated to the Executive and Administration Committees. **(Action: John Borley)**

8. Financial Monitoring Report

- 8.1 The Committee discussed the report and **noted**:
- The forecast outturn position on resource and capital, which was £5.2m – down by £0.1m on the previous month;
 - The position on contingency - £2.3m is held, approximately £1.1m of which will be required to fund costs associated with the printing & publishing programme and with a renegotiation on terms and conditions; and
 - The technical accounting adjustments that will impact the accounts.
- 8.2 **Myfanwy Barrett** welcomed the improved financial performance in the Department of Information Services.

9. Performance and Risk Update/Updates from Board Members

- 9.1 The Committee discussed the performance and risk report.
- 9.2 The Committee **agreed** to revise the corporate target for school visits in 2015/16 for the remainder of the financial year from 71,000 to 61,800 and requested a further report back on progress towards the revised target in two months. **(Action: Penny Young)**
- 9.3 The Committee welcomed the reduction in carbon dioxide levels.

- 9.4 The Committee requested that the portfolio dashboard include some more commentary in future, as well as direction of travel arrows, as an interim measure pending the outcome of the Director General's Review. **(Action: Jane Hough/Sam Jones)**
- 9.5 The Committee **agreed** to do more to identify and communicate success stories from the departmental updates.

10. Communications

- 10.1 The Committee discussed the key messages to be communicated to staff from the meeting.

Committee Secretary
17 February 2016