

**Minutes of the Management Board meeting
held on Thursday 6 March 2014 at 3.00pm**

Those present: Sir Robert Rogers KCB (Clerk and Chief Executive) (Chair)
Myfanwy Barrett (Director of Finance)
John Borley CB (Director General of Facilities)
Joan Miller (Director of PICT, external member)
David Natzler (Clerk Assistant and Director General of
Chamber and Committee Services)
John Pullinger CB (Director General of Information Services)
Andrew Walker (Director General of HR and Change)
Dame Janet Gaymer DBE (non-executive member)

Apologies: Barbara Scott (non-executive member)

In attendance: Tom Goldsmith (Board Secretary)
Ben Williams (Assistant Secretary)
Mary Ollard (Change Manager, House of Lords) (item 1 only)
Jane Hough (Strategy, Planning and Performance Manager)
(item 5 only)
Reg Perry (Head of Employee Relations, Pay and Policy)
(item 6 only)

1. Actions arising

1.1 **Tom Goldsmith** updated the Board on actions arising from the previous meeting.

Action 1: The Business Resilience Group was continuing to keep options for training exercises under review; action ongoing.

Actions 7 – 11: A list of SROs had been compiled. A draft letter of appointment and draft guidance for SROs had been produced. Training for SROs and an event for SRO and Board Members was being arranged.

Action 13: Options for training were still being considered.

Action 16: A paper outlining the next steps was going to PICTAB on Monday.

Action 17: The **Chair** clarified that the action should refer to the “House Service’s diversity profile” rather than “department’s diversity profile”. **David Natzler** said that filling secondments via the civil service gateway was less likely to result in an increase in BME representation than recruiting through informal networks such as those developed by ParliREACH. However there was likely to be a limit to the duration of an appointment made through the informal route. It should also be noted that staff on inward secondments were not currently captured in the House’s diversity figures. The **Board**

recorded its support for pursuing the informal approach as the approach most likely to bring about the improvement it wanted to see as well as using the Civil Service Gateway, and for revisiting how diversity statistics are compiled. **Andrew Walker** noted that conducting more external recruitments for generalist roles would help increase representation of under-represented groups. **David Natzler** noted that of current A2 second clerks, there were nine women and eight men and that only two of the 17 second clerks were former fast streamers.

Action 19: John Borley informed the Board that PED would absorb the work arising from the changes to the Cromwell Green Entrance without there being any impact on other projects.

2. Review of Online Services

2.1 The Board discussed the paper on the review of Online Service.

2.2 The **Board agreed** that: the two key recommendations made by mySociety should be implemented; the report of mySociety should be published, and feedback invited on how it should be implemented; and a detailed plan for implementation should be presented to the Boards at a future date.

2.2 **Action: Mary Ollard** to ensure that meetings with staff in WIS and PICT should be held next week. Following those meetings staff should be sent copies of the report and a revised version of the Board paper. Advice on the format of the meeting should be sought from the internal communications team.

3. Oral updates from Board members

3.1 **Andrew Walker** reported on changes of personnel and responsibilities among the HR business partners. He circulated a note from the Leading4Parliament Community of Practice that was looking at improving leadership skills in the House. The latest figures on uptake of the competency framework were circulated, there was a risk that the Board's targets would not be reached. Heads of Department were asked to follow this up with their senior leadership teams.

3.2 **Myfanwy Barrett** reported on forecasting in the House Service. The Department of Finance would be placing an increased emphasis on this area in the next year as an internal audit report had found low levels of compliance in Departments; in some cases changes to current arrangements would be considered. The **Chair** noted that the Board had been considering a number of compliance issues recently, and that it was important that the manager's role in managing staff, resources and risks was clearly reflected in job plans so that expectations were clearly set out.

- 3.3 **John Pullinger** noted that the incentives in the current system for forecasting meant that managers were very worried about even a small overspend but were not concerned to the same extent about underspends. Most staff wanted to comply but processes did not always make this easy. **David Natzler** said he thought that forecasting had improved in his Department. Any new activity aimed at increasing compliance should be clear about its objectives and acknowledge that many staff already did what was required of them. Where staff were not doing as they were required line managers should be informed. The **Chair** said the Board needed a clearer picture of the current situation.
- 3.4 **Action: Myfanwy Barrett and Tom Goldsmith** to produce a list of core duties and responsibilities of managers with a view to ensuring that, where not already included, they are recorded in forward job plans
- 3.5 **John Borley** reported that Patsy Richards had been appointed as SRO for co-location and the business case would be completed in April. However, to meet the deadline of finishing co-location before the election, staff moves would need to start before the business case was finalised. The Board observed that communications and consultation to some of the staff affected could have been better managed; this needed to be addressed.
- 3.6 **David Natzler** reported that the date of State Opening had now been announced and that the final session of this Parliament would be shorter than usual. The recently recruited D1 doorkeepers would be taking up post next week.
- 3.7 **John Pullinger** reported to the Board on his experience being “reverse mentored”; there was a feeling amongst some staff that the Board’s messages about diversity were not being accompanied by commensurate action. He had attended the launch of a study on diversity amongst select committee witnesses and had been impressed by the willingness of staff to address this issue. The outreach programmes with universities had now entered its next stage and he expressed his thanks to all the staff involved.
- 3.8 **Joan Miller** reported that the plan to stabilise the network was almost complete, although this work had created a lot of disruption. The network contractors were changing the team that looked after the House’s contract to increase the skill level of staff. The next 30 days would focus on increasing the performance of the platform and then a final 30 day programme of work would be undertaken; further communications would be sent to users. The Board noted widespread positive feedback for the efforts of frontline PICT staff and expressed its thanks for the work they had done in the face of technical difficulties beyond their control.
- 3.9 **Janet Gaymer** reported that her senior leadership group had raised concerns about the communication of co-location that had been discussed earlier. The

next meeting of the Audit Committee would be looking at the lessons from Network Refresh and General Election planning.

3.10 The **Chair** noted that the Board had agreed a paper by correspondence:

4. Performance and Risk

4.1 The Board discussed the Audio Visual Programme. The governance of the Programme would be discussed at the next meeting of PICTAB. It would be helpful if the two Clerks agreed to establish this work as a formal programme, to be run by the existing steering group, and issue an appointment letter to the SRO. The Board noted that reorganising funding across the PICTAB portfolio was likely to allow extra resources to be assigned to this work next year. The Board **agreed** that the audio visual work should be formally established as a programme.

4.2 The Board discussed the Network Convergence Programme. It noted that a paper was going to the next meeting of PICTAB and requested an update after this meeting. **Action: John Borley** to brief the Board on the outcome of PICTAB's discussion of the Network Convergence Programme.

4.3 The Board discussed 53 Parliament Street. The shop would not be ready until November which would impact on income generation work.

4.4 The Board discussed invoice payment performance. The reduction in performance was due to the fact that a payment run was not made between Christmas and New Year, and the figure for subsequent months was on target. Action would be taken to prevent a recurrence in future years.

4.5 **Myfanwy Barrett** introduced the Financial Outturn report. There had been further movement in the Resource Account due to the application of the decision on the 2005 rates rebate to the 2010 settlement, as well as a series of small moves within Departments. This had led to the underspend increasing.

5. Corporate business plan

5.1 **Jane Hough** introduced her paper. She thanked Departments for the further information that had been provided since this draft had been circulated and said final requests for information would be sent out shortly.

5.2 The **Board** noted the need for greater clarity on the pay situation before the report could be finalised, and noted the timetable for agreeing the final text. The Board discussed the placement of the Diversity & Inclusion material in the report and agreed to leave it under "Respected". The Board noted the arrangement for reviewing performance indicators. The Board agreed the list of Board level risks to be published.

6. Pay and Reward

6.1 The Board discussed the paper on pay and reward.

7. A.O.B.

[Adjourned at 17:45]

Tom Goldsmith
Secretary

Robert Rogers
Chairman