

**Minutes of the Management Board meeting
held on Thursday 22 November 2007**

Those present: Malcolm Jack (Chief Executive) (Chairman)
Douglas Millar CB (Director General of Chamber and
Committee Services)
John Pullinger (Director General of Information
Services)
Andrew Walker (Director General of Resources)
Sue Harrison (Director General of Facilities)
Joan Miller (Director of PICT, external member)

In attendance: Robert Twigger (Head of the Office of the Clerk)
[s.40] (Private Secretary to the Clerk of the House)
Jacqy Sharpe (Clerk of the Journals, for item 2)
Chris Ridley (Director of Financial Management, for
item 4)
Heather Bryson (Tebbit Change team, for item 5)
Jill Pay (Tebbit Change team, for item 5)
Mark Hutton (Clerk of the Procedure Committee, for
item 6)

1. Matters arising from previous meetings

1.1. The **Board Secretary** reported that all actions from the October meeting had been completed.

2. Risk and performance

2.1. The Management Board agreed the reallocation of ownership of corporate risks proposed in the paper, save that risk 3 would be jointly shared by Joan Miller and John Pullinger, and agreed to review the corporate risks in the spring.

2.2. The **Chairman** then welcomed Jacqy Sharpe, Clerk of the Journals, who was leading the work of the high-level group on BCDR which had been instituted by the two Houses' Management Board, and who gave the Management Board an update on its work.

2.3. **Jacqy Sharpe** said that the main conclusion of the group so far was that the House should introduce the "Gold-Silver-Bronze" incident protocol, which was used widely elsewhere in the public sector. It would not be instituted in every situation; it was particularly useful when there were various business areas affected and there needed to be a strategic

consideration of conflicting priorities. The Gold group would be responsible to the Clerk of the House and Clerk of the Parliaments as Chief Executives. Who attended the Gold group would depend on the nature of the incident.

2.4. The Management Board discussed who in the Commons should be responsible for invoking Gold group. The paper suggested that Black Rod and the Serjeant should do so. This was due to their responsibility for security and the fact that their departments had 24-hour systems in place to notify staff. The Board noted that security was not the only type of incident that might mean that the “Gold-Silver-Bronze” protocol would need to be instituted. One possibility was that incidents should be reported to the Head of the Office of the Chief Executive, who should, on behalf of the Chief Executive, instruct relevant members of Gold and Silver group. The Board agreed that the high-level group should discuss this matter again and bring proposals back to the Board.

2.5. [s.24 and s.38]

2.6. [s.24 and s.38]

2.7. [s.24 and s.38]

Jacqy Sharpe then left the meeting.

2.8. Sue Harrison updated the Board on issues with the House’s electricity supply. There had been a number of power outages over the previous weeks and Roger Ward was discussing this with EDF Energy as a matter of priority.

2.9. The two generators in 7 Millbank were now fully operational and could meet existing electricity needs, but they were nearing maximum capacity. Sue would be pursuing this with Works as it was likely that calls on the electricity supply would increase in the future.

2.10. The Board noted that it would have been helpful to staff to have standing instructions on what to do in the event of an incident such as a power failure, particularly with regard to shutting down electrical equipment and IT systems. This should be linked in to work being undertaken by the high level group on BCDR regarding command and control protocols and the “Gold-Silver-Bronze” incident system.

2.11. The **Chairman** asked about the power situation in the Northern part of the Estate. **Sue** said that apart from Norman Shaw North and South buildings in the northern part of the Estate were in the same situation as 7 Millbank, relying on back-up generators. Each building needed a separate

plan, which took account of the fact that incidents in one building could have effects across many parts of the Estate. This had been shown on 30 October where the power failure in 7 Millbank had had direct effects on broadcasting and on Hansard in the House of Lords. The Board agreed to receive a further update from the Director General of Facilities regarding electricity supply plans by building and staff protocols at a future meeting.

2.12. *Actions: Board to receive further update on electricity supply.*

3. Oral updates from Director Generals

3.1. The Chairman invited Director Generals to update the Board on matters in their area of responsibility.

3.2. John Pullinger said that:

3.2.1. He would be attending the Administration Committee to speak to the paper on providing education facilities, and the linked issue of windowless offices.

3.2.2. Changes to the Members Library which had been requested by the Administration Committee had caused dissatisfaction with some Members. He would also discuss the matter with the Committee.

3.2.3. As Chairman of JBSB he had been taking forward the Tebbit recommendation that there should be a PICT health-check, and he and Joan planned to meet with organisations who might undertake such a health-check soon, with a view to it taking place in May or June.

3.3. Sue Harrison updated the Board on the recent Parliamentary Estates Board meeting:

3.3.1. Fire protection, the 25 year plan and accommodation issues had been discussed.

3.3.2. The Board agreed that Mel Barlex's highest priority after his arrival in January should be the delivery of a 25 year plan and an accommodation strategy to the Management Board for its consideration.

3.4. Joan Miller said that:

3.4.1. The Joint Department Implementation Board's report had been accepted by both Chief Executives and would be considered by the Commission and the House Committee in the Lords soon.

3.4.2. Joan would be updating the Administration Committee on progress in PICT in December. The Commission's response to the Committee's report in ICT was awaited, and recommendations with budgetary costs would not be implemented until it had been published.

3.4.3. Regarding the Tebbit programme PICT was anticipating a high degree of work to regularise systems behind Director Generals' decisions. She expected this work to be completed by the end of March.

3.5. Andrew Walker said that:

3.5.1. The HAIS Board had met to discuss implications for HAIS of the Tebbit programme and had agreed to produce a timetable that showed what would be done and by when.

3.5.2. The Standards and Privileges Committee had recently produced a report on a number of cases of misuse of the Communications allowance. A number of other complaints were also being considered. It was proving complex for staff to judge the application of the rules at the margins of what was acceptable.

3.5.3. Following the HMRC incident, Andrew suggested that a staff notice reminding staff on the importance of security of data would be opportune. The Board also agreed to ask for a short study on data security to be undertaken and reported to the Board.

3.6. Douglas Millar said that:

3.6.1. He and the Chairman were producing evidence for the Modernisation Committee including on its inquiry into regional accountability, which might have resource and facilities implications for the House service.

3.6.2. The report of the Committee Office review was nearly finalised. Helen Irwin had consulted John Pullinger directly about its conclusions as they had implications for the Library.

3.7. Action: *DG, Resources to co-ordinate a short study on data security to be reported to the Board.*

4. Three-year financial plan

- 4.1. The Chairman** welcomed Chris Ridley, Director of Financial Management.
- 4.2. Andrew Walker** said that once agreed by the Management Board the paper would be considered by the Finance and Services Committee and the Commission. The paper asked the Board for a strategic steer on future financial planning. To assist the Board DFA had undertaken scrutiny of departmental budgets, with DFA's budgets being scrutinised by the Departmental Finance Officer in the Clerk's Department.
- 4.3.** There were three options: agree to specific bids as listed; keep with a level baseline; or institute cuts on discretionary areas of spending. The **Chairman** said that for the coming year there were too many uncertainties to make considering budget savings meaningful, but the Board should be prepared to consider such a policy in future.
- 4.4. Andrew** said that he had also undertaken a scrutiny of staff numbers and an annex to the paper laid out in detail the reasons for increases. This revealed a picture of mostly validated growth: if the Board wished to see a halt to increases there would need to be a consideration of reducing or stopping some services when new services were requested. The **Chairman** said that he believed that there did need to be more control of staffing numbers by the Board, and it was agreed that Andrew should present a paper to the Board with options for controlling staff numbers. The paper should also take account of agency and casual staff, who often did not feature in staffing figures but used the accommodation and resources of the House.
- 4.5. Action:** *Paper on staffing to be presented to January 2008 Board.*
- 4.6.** Regarding works and estates expenditure Andrew believed that matters were not clear enough for bids to be included in the coming Estimate. He suggested the Board recommended to the Commission a level baseline while highlighting that major works and estates expenditure could lead to a Supplementary Estimate.
- 4.7. Chris Ridley** said that the Board's view was also sought on the specific staff bids listed in the paper. The Board endorsed the staff bids.
- 4.8.** The Board agreed to recommend to the Commission that a level baseline should be kept for 2008/09. This might involve applying a general efficiency reduction to discretionary areas to create a central change programme reserve. The Board also agreed to support the early completion of business cases for both Works and ICT investment, and noted that there needed to be assurance that these areas were properly resourced with the correct skills to complete business cases in a timely

manner.

5. Progress with re-alignment of departments

5.1. Andrew Walker said that work was underway to consider the future of HR, finance and procurement. There was emerging agreement to a partnership approach, although there were a number of different ways in which it could work that needed further discussion with staff in those fields. Elizabeth Honer was leading this work and would be talking to Director Generals about their business priorities for HR, finance and procurement. It was hoped that the Board would be able to take a decision in principle in December.

5.2. The Chairman then welcomed Heather Bryson and Jill Pay from the Tebbit change team.

5.3. Heather Bryson said that the team were working towards the Board's objectives that by 1 January 2008 staff should know which departments they would be in and reporting lines would be clear, and issues to be taken forward had been identified. The change team had formulated a work plan, an issues log and a risk register. The team's priority was to consult staff and to do so visibly so that it was easy for staff to give their views if they wished. This included drop-in sessions, suggestion boxes and opportunities for staff without access to the intranet to comment in hard copy via posters. The Board needed to consider planning for the implementation period between its meeting on 13th December and the rise of the House on 18th December. Heather suggested that on 14th and 17th December Director Generals should talk personally to staff in their areas who would be affected. A meeting with the Trade Union Side would be held on the morning of 14th December. An all staff notice would be sent out before the rise of the House. **Jill Pay** said that the change team also suggested that every member of staff in the new department should receive a welcome letter from the appropriate Director General after the institution of the new Departments.

5.4. The Chairman said that on behalf of the Board he wished to thank the Change team for their work so far. He invited Bob Twigger to update the Board on the work being undertaken in the Office of the Chief Executive.

5.5. Bob Twigger said that following Monday's GPSC he and the Change team would be meeting with the Trade Union Side on a weekly basis. The Internal Communications Manager was discussing with Print Services stationery styles from 1 January and she would be discussing these with Director Generals soon. Bob was drafting a first draft of a response from the Commission to the Tebbit report for consideration at their December meeting and he would discuss this with Director Generals.

5.6. The Board agreed with the proposals of the Change team, and asked that the Change team update it on change activities in each department on a regular basis.

5.7. *Action: Change team updates to the Board to include information on departmental change teams; Director Generals to write to welcome staff to their new departments in early January.*

6. e-Petitions

6.1. The **Chairman** welcomed Mark Hutton, Clerk of the Procedure Committee.

6.2. **Mark Hutton** said that the Procedure Committee was proceeding with its inquiry into e-Petitions. It planned to report in the first half of 2008. He hoped that the inquiry would be able to take into account the technical issues with instituting such a system, resource implications, procedural matters and the possible burden on individual Members.

6.3. The Management Board agreed that it should submit evidence to the inquiry that encompassed the major issues with the introduction of e-Petitions, including costs and resources needed to set the system up and ongoing costs and staffing implications. The Board noted that such a system would be likely to raise public expectations of the petitioning process.

6.4. *Action: Office of the Chief Executive to co-ordinate submission of evidence to the Procedure Committee's inquiry.*

7. Road map for estates strategy

7.1. **Sue Harrison** updated the Board on progress with the formulation of 5 year and 25 year estates strategies.

7.2. **Sue** said that she had earlier raised her concern that although a lot of work had been undertaken matters had not been brought to a conclusion, and she was grateful for the Board's support for these strategies to be Mel Barlex's highest priority in January.

8. Corporate Business Plan

8.1. The Board noted with satisfaction progress with the 2008 Corporate Business Plan and agreed to approve the text by correspondence in early December.

9. Any other business

9.1. None.

[adjourned at 6.25 pm

**Robert Twigger
Secretary**

**Malcolm Jack
Chairman**

5 December 2007