

MANAGEMENT IN CONFIDENCE

MB2008.MIN.7

Minutes of the Management Board meeting held on Thursday 17 July 2008

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)
John Borley CB (Director General of Facilities)

In attendance: Philippa Helme (Board Secretary)
Tracey Garratty (Private Secretary to the Clerk of the
House)

1. Matters arising from previous meetings

- 1.1. Further to item 6 **Andrew Walker** said that the staff notice relating to social networking and blogging was likely to be published in the autumn.
- 1.2. Further to items 4 and 5 **John Pullinger** said that work to prepare for the audit of records was ongoing and was broadly to timetable.
- 1.3. Further to item 11 the **Chairman** said that he had discussed the matter of stand-by power at Tothill Street with the Clerk of the Parliaments, and had asked Andy Makepeace to produce a note on timescales and costs of introducing stand-by power prior to occupation by either House.

2. Risk and performance

- 2.1. **John Borley** said that the biggest risk which he was managing in his department related to maintenance and management of plant and machinery. Action would be taken to manage the risk in the Department of Facilities, but it would have effect across the whole House Service, and he hoped it could be added to the corporate register.
- 2.2. It was agreed that the suitability of the corporate risks, and whether risks needed to be added, reworded or removed would best be considered in the autumn, alongside the emerging objectives for the next financial year.

- 2.3.** The Board noted that PICT had improved its service desk response time and the target was now only narrowly being missed. Payments to Members were still missing target due both to volume of claims and staff turnover.
- 2.4. Joan Miller** introduced her paper on corporate risk three, which related to IT infrastructure. There were a number of facets to the risk which were listed in the paper, together with mitigating action being taken. PICT was investing heavily in IT management, and had launched a programme to examine its customer service and account management, with the aim of getting a much closer relationship between “fault” and “fix”.
- 2.5.** Consideration also needed to be given to demand for services, and Joan suggested that this needed to be considered at the earliest point when developing new services. There was a two year programme in place to address issues with IT infrastructure and move the infrastructure on to a more resilient environment, which could be accelerated if the Board wished if more resource was allocated to it. The Members’ Centre had not reduced the number of staff available to restore critical systems. The number of staff in the support team for the Procedural services remained at the same level, although it was now incorporated into a larger team that supported other services as well. Joan explained that overall this provided a more resilient support service for the Procedural services, with all the staff in the extended hours team working under instruction that a Procedural fault always took top priority.
- 2.6.** The **Chairman** commented that it was essential that PICT engaged very closely with the rest of the business, to enable the House Service to meet new demands.
- 2.7.** Finally the Board considered a progress report from Chris Ridley, Director of Financial Management, on staff numbers and cost trends. **Andrew Walker** said that this was a work in progress, and it would be useful to have the Board’s views on the information to be presented. The paper also proposed work on agreeing a set of standard definitions for terms used in the report. The Board agreed that the information contained in the report was useful. Data on contract or agency staff who occupied space in the Estate might also be developed. After the next update the staffing data should be incorporated into the monthly performance and risk report.

3. Oral updates from Director Generals

3.1. Andrew Walker said that:

- 3.1.1.** He was very grateful for the large number of offers from staff across departments to assist with the work to be done to prepare for the release of detailed information on Members' allowances.
- 3.1.2.** Paul Silk would be leading a development project relating to Members' allowances. A team would be needed to work with him, either full or part-time or on a specific area of work, and volunteers would be welcome.
- 3.1.3.** The remodelling of HR, finance and procurement was going ahead. He was grateful to DCCS for loaning a member of staff to this project.

3.2. Douglas Millar said that the business continuity exercise was due to take place the next day. Business continuity and impact plans had been produced by all departments, but they were a work in progress. He proposed, and the Board agreed, that Mark Harvey and Bob Norris should continue their work until Christmas.

3.3. John Borley said that:

- 3.3.1.** There had been media reports on asbestos in the Palace of Westminster. Initial information for Members and staff had been disseminated via the intranet and John hoped that a joint management and TUS statement could be issued shortly.
- 3.3.2.** Estates and Works reunification was progressing. An interim Head of Planning was starting work on Monday next.

3.4. John Pullinger said that:

- 3.4.1.** The Members' Centre had opened on time, and had received much positive feedback. The main interest was in PICT and the Department of Resources, though there had been positive benefits from having a range of services available; for instance the take up of DIS briefings on "Today's Business" had increased.
- 3.4.2.** The PICT healthcheck had been published and had been discussed by the Joint Business Systems Board.
- 3.4.3.** The final member of the Outreach team had been recruited.

3.5. Joan Miller said that:

- 3.5.1.** The Members' Centre had been very positive for PICT, with many enquiries being from those seeking help rather than reporting faults.

She had observed that the team in the Members' Centre, drawn from across departments, was working well together.

- 3.5.2.** The account manager pilot in the Department of Information Services had worked well. It was now being piloted in the Lords Library and in the autumn it was hoped it could be rolled out to all departments.

4. Staff survey

4.1. The **Chairman** said that the overall response rate to the survey was 53%, the same as the response rate to the 2007 survey. The paper gave some headline results, key messages and suggested actions. It also gave the Board comparative information with both the wider public and the private sector. It was proposed to publish a results summary to all staff before the summer recess, and that the Board should consider more detailed results and an action plan in the autumn.

4.2. The Board agreed that the results summary should be published on the intranet before the summer recess and to discuss the more detailed results and the way forward at the September Board meeting, including a discussion with Towers Perrin who had conducted the survey on the Board's behalf.

5. House Equality Scheme

5.1. Andrew Walker said that the paper gave the Board a progress report on work towards an Equality Scheme, reported on interviews that had taken place and asked the Board whether it had priorities for what the Scheme should cover.

5.2. The **Chairman** said that in order for the Board to be able to take a lead it needed information on the situation in other organisations and what might be realistic goals or targets for the House Service. The Board would need to review the available data before its consideration of the draft Scheme, in advance of its presentation to the Commission in November. **Andrew Walker** agreed; work could be done on these areas if the Board would find it useful.

5.3. The Board agreed to consider a paper on these issues at its September meeting, and to consider the draft Equality Scheme in October.

5.4. Action: *Corporate Diversity Managers to produce paper on goals and targets relating to equality in other organisations and possible goals for the House Service for September Board meeting.*

6. Unified Fast Stream

- 6.1.** The **Chairman** said that the report of the working group was good. It was proposed that Fast Stream recruitment in 2009 would remain within DCCS, with the scheme becoming centrally managed in 2010. An in-house Fast Stream scheme would also be developed. The covering note from Andrew Walker also raised a number of issues of succession planning and career management, and a report from the SMDP group which had considered these issues was appended to the working group's report.
- 6.2.** The Board endorsed the conclusions of report, and agreed that Andrew Walker would now take forward detailed implementation on behalf of the Board in conjunction with the Clerk of Committees and other interested parties.

7. Standards of behaviour

- 7.1.** The **Chairman** said that the paper followed on from that considered by the Board at its May meeting. **John Pullinger** said that this was an issue that had been raised at a change meeting that he had recently attended. He suggested that the issues raised in the paper linked with the draft Equality Scheme.
- 7.2.** The Board agreed to reconsider the paper together with the draft Equality Scheme when it was presented to the Board in October.

8. Business and financial planning for 2009/10

- 8.1.** **Philippa Helme** said that draft guidance had been issued on the next round of business and financial planning via the Business Planning Group. The Board would discuss high level priorities in September, and fully worked up plans would be presented to the Board in October. It was suggested that after the Board's September meeting there would be value in widening the discussion to the House Service's senior leaders as a whole.
- 8.2.** The Board endorsed the programme, and acknowledged that it would be tight and came at a time when many staff would be taking annual leave. The co-operation of staff with the process and the demanding timetable was valued.

9. Any other business

9.1. Philippa Helme said that a take note paper had been tabled on the work of the action groups of the current SMDP cohort. It was agreed that she should write to participants on behalf of the Board to thank them for their work.

9.2. Philippa Helme said that she and Andrew Walker had met with a long list of candidates for the role of external member of the Management Board. The Chairman would be interviewing a shortlist of three candidates in the next week.

[adjourned at 5.56pm

Philippa Helme
Secretary

Malcolm Jack
Chairman

24 July 2008