

**Minutes of the Management Board meeting
held on Tuesday 30 September 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)
Joan Miller (Director of PICT, external member)
Alex Jablonowski (External member)

In attendance: Philippa Helme (Board Secretary)
[s.40] (Acting Assistant Secretary)
[s.40] (Towers Perrin, for item 3)

1. Matters arising from previous meetings

- 1.1.** The **Chairman** welcomed Alex Jablonowski to his first meeting of the Management Board.
- 1.2.** **Philippa Helme** reported that the revision of the role of the Parliamentary Estate Board and its sub-groups was outstanding (from the December 2007 meeting, item 1 on the Board's list).
- 1.3.** On the auditing of records (from the May and June 2008 meetings, items 3, 4 and 6), **John Pullinger** said that the steering group had met and achievement of the timetable was on track, with the audit due to take place in October. A report would be made to the Board in January 2009.
- 1.4.** On social networking and data security (from May and June 2008 respectively, items 5 and 7), **Andrew Walker** noted the appointment of Brenda Brevitt to lead on data security, who was working as part of the expanded Freedom of Information team. Brenda would also consider the issue of access to social networking sites, and would discuss that matter with departments.
- 1.5.** Other actions listed in the Board's action list had either been completed or were on track.

2. Risk and performance

2.1. On Members' claims, **Andrew Walker** noted the marked improvement in processing claims accurately and within eight working days. Andrew highlighted the deterioration in invoice payments performance in August, which was primarily because of delays at the authorisation stage. An apparent difficulty of transferring authorisation under HAIS was raised, and it was agreed that Andrew Walker and Joan Miller would investigate this matter.

2.2. *Action: Andrew Walker and Joan Miller to investigate the transfer of HAIS authorisation.*

2.3. DIS had reassessed the risk of disruption from flooding after the flooding incident in Peers Lobby in August. The **Chairman** noted that the response to the incident lacked a systematic approach, which was a matter of considerable concern. It was suggested that utility risk was not adequately captured in the risk register; and changes in the presentation of the corporate and departmental risk registers were proposed.

2.4. **John Borley** noted that energy consumption was 68% above the target in August. Targets needed to be realistic, but more effort was required to reduce energy usage. An energy champion would soon be appointed. It was proposed that staff be given a card showing how they could save energy. More detailed information on the nature of energy consumption should also be available.

3. Oral up-dates from Director Generals

4.

4.1. **Douglas Millar** said that:

4.1.1. a House-wide trawl would take place for the post of the Deliverer of the Vote;

4.1.2. a bicameral meeting would take place on 24 October to consider the issue of Parliamentary copyright across written, electronic and broadcast media; nominations for the meeting were welcome. One outcome might be to establish a working party to develop an overall policy covering all media.

4.2. **John Pullinger** said that:

4.2.1. the summer tours programme had been successful, and the target should be exceeded;

4.2.2. a new head of online services was now in post.

4.3. **Andrew Walker** said that:

4.3.1. work was continuing to publish details of Members' allowances, which had benefited from the involvement of eleven additional staff from across the House Service. The scanning and redaction stage was almost complete, and Members would be invited to verify their invoices on the

intranet prior to publication, which would probably occur in the New Year;

- 4.3.2. he had written to the Leader of the House in response to her consultation on audit and assurance of Members' allowances;
- 4.3.3. the implementation of the HR, finance and commercial remodelling was continuing, and a new commercial director had been appointed who should be in post by the end of the year;
- 4.3.4. PCS and Prospect had invoked the disputes procedure over the pay negotiations. The matter was now at conciliation stage.

4.4. John Borley said that:

- 4.4.1. the new cleaning contract was in effect, and the response of the cleaning staff had been positive. However, the staff were being balloted over industrial action;
- 4.4.2. following the failure of the stand-by generator and an initial report, a further investigation had been sought on maintenance disciplines;
- 4.4.3. the reunification of Estates and Works had been completed that day.

4.5. Joan Miller said that:

- 4.5.1. the renewal of infrastructure was underway and would take 18 months, followed by a programme for less critical applications. Introduction of the new desktop would create opportunities for new working practices;
- 4.5.2. in response to the PICT health check, new ways of engaging with departments on IT needs were being trialled, and a cross-House meeting with senior managers to discuss an action plan would take place next week.

4.6. The Chairman said that he would attend the SMDP launch event at Ashridge on Thursday.

5. Staff survey

5.1. The Chairman welcomed [s.40]. **Andrew Walker** noted that the paper invited the Board to agree the top three areas for action, which would be developed in an action plan to be submitted to the November Board meeting, and to agree the dissemination of the results to staff.

5.2. [s.40] presented the key findings of the report. The results of the survey had been grouped into nine categories: engagement; immediate management; working organisation and service quality; communications; involvement and cooperation; training and development; performance and reward; leadership, and change. The results had been analysed to determine the three key drivers that could help achieve significant improvements in staff satisfaction in areas such as engagement. In many cases, a comparison of the results was made to the public sector, national average and highest performers.

5.3. Overall, the results were judged to be encouraging given the change that the House Service was undergoing. In particular, the level of engagement achieved a favourable score of 74% and it was agreed that it was important to maintain this high level. [s.40] suggested that this could be achieved through

5.4. Some of the other key findings included:

- while most departments achieved good overall ratings, some directorates performed less well;
- SCS and A pay bands generally gave better scores than other pay bands;
- the levels of job dissatisfaction and staff seeking to leave were higher than the norm;
- a relatively high proportion of staff sought better IT systems to enable them to do their job effectively;
- line managers achieved higher scores than senior managers;
- intra-departmental cooperation was rated highly, more so than inter-departmental cooperation, and the sharing of best practice was an area of some concern;
- staff felt they are relatively poorly paid;
- staff generally judged they themselves were treated with fairness and respect, but were less sure that all staff were treated respectfully, regardless of their position.

5.5. The Board considered how to disseminate the results of the survey to staff. The summer recess had already delayed publication, so it was important to move quickly. The Board agreed to issue the results to staff in October in an accessible format, along the lines of the summary results sent to the Board in July.

5.6. *Action: Andrew Walker to develop a report for staff and gain the agreement of the Board by correspondence.*

5.7. The Board considered the development of a corporate action plan. It was agreed that this work should not hinder departments from developing their own action plans. Staff should be involved in that work, and actions should be tailored for particular groups of staff. One approach might be to concentrate on a small number of measurable areas. The Board agreed that Andrew Walker, supported by the Resource Management Group, should develop a corporate action plan based on the top three areas identified in the paper, namely: involvement and cooperation; leadership; and performance and reward. It was suggested that fairness might also be added to the list.

5.8. *Action: Andrew Walker to submit a corporate action plan in response to the Staff Survey to the November Board meeting.*

5.9. *Action: Directors General to commence work on their departmental responses to the Staff Survey, in liaison with Andrew Walker's work on the corporate response.*

6. Strategic Direction

- 6.1. Andrew Walker** introduced the paper, and invited the Board to focus on its strategic approach.
- 6.2.** The Board started by considering its vision for the future. The House Service needed to be equipped and flexible to meet the changing requirements of Members. It should plan ahead, to ensure that it was able to surpass the expectations of Members in the Parliament after next. Staff should all be aware that their primary role was to support and equip Members in their work.
- 6.3.** The Board then turned to the three primary objectives and six supporting tasks set out in the Strategic Plan. It was agreed that they should be supplemented by clear goals to convey the Board's priorities in delivering them. The Board broadly welcomed the draft goals outlined in the paper, namely:
- to make Members feel that they are receiving an excellent service from all parts of the House Service;
 - to deliver continuous and measurable improvement in the services we provide to Members and to the public;
 - to increase the value for money of the services we deliver and demonstrate that we are achieving it;
 - to ensure that we have the capability to deliver the services required by Members and the public now and in the future.
- 6.4.** Below these top-level goals, but of increasing importance, was sustainability. The Board agreed that prominence should be given to improving sustainability in the management of the Estate and across the work of the House. Action to address concerns about equality and respect, and other issues highlighted in the staff survey, would fall under the ambit of the capability goal.
- 6.5.** The Board considered how best to ensure and demonstrate value for money. Rather than taking a zero-based approach to staffing or to budgeting, benchmarking might be more effective in showing whether the House Service was working as effectively as comparable organisations. Similar exercises had recently been undertaken in PICT and also in the HR, finance and commercial area. This might be accompanied by a capability review similar in nature to those recently conducted in the Civil Service.
- 6.6.** The Board considered its priorities for service improvement. It agreed that, in the near-term, improvements in the delivery of Members' allowances were crucial. Over the longer term, management of the Estate and IT services were the top priorities. Further integrating IT into the business and meeting the increasing expectations of Members for IT support were of particular importance.
- 6.7.** Following the success of the Members' Centre, the Board wished to deliver some further visible improvements in services or "quick wins". Building on recent improvements to PDAs provided to Members, further IT enhancements

would be identified. The Board supported **John Pullinger's** proposal to create a new, Member-friendly, portal to the intranet by Easter.

6.8. The Management Conference on 10 October would provide an opportunity to develop the Board's thinking further, prior to the drafting of the Corporate Business Plan. The plan should include, where appropriate, targets for improvement. The **Chairman** proposed that the Board should develop its thinking in more detail at an off-site awayday.

6.9. In order to assist its strategic approach, the Board agreed to proceed in developing a Balanced Scorecard, underpinned by an integrated system for performance and risk monitoring. It was recognised that developing the scorecard would take time and investment of effort by Board Members themselves. It was agreed that external consultants would help to facilitate this process.

6.10. *Action: Philippa Helme to appoint consultants and to develop a Balanced Scorecard proposal in collaboration with Board members.*

7. Business continuity

7.1. **Douglas Millar** reported that that the 18 July scenario-based exercise had been a qualified success and a key positive consequence had been to better engage senior staff with the issue. The next step was to implement an effective framework for incident management, as recommended by Crisis Solutions.

7.2. The **Chairman** welcomed the exercise, which had highlighted some important issues. The Board agreed that the contract of Crisis Solutions and the appointment of Bob Norris should be extended to allow implementation of an effective framework as proposed in the paper before the Board, and that further discussion should take place on the form that that framework should take.

7.3. Douglas added that a paper would be submitted to the Board on the completion of the work of the Business Continuity Steering Group.

7.4. The Board discussed business continuity more broadly, and noted that mechanisms to deal with minor incidents also needed to be in place. Agreed trigger mechanisms, and improved lines of communications both up and down, needed to be developed, and responsibilities made clear. Departments' Business Continuity and Disaster Recovery Plans needed to be better linked. The new Business Risk and Resilience Group would take forward this work including considering separate plans for each building within the estate.

8. Any other business

8.1. There was no other business.

9. Date of next meeting

9.1. The next scheduled meeting of the Management Board would take place on Thursday 23 October at 4pm.

[adjourned at 5.40pm

Philippa Helme
Secretary

Malcolm Jack
Chairman

10 October 2008