

**Minutes of the Management Board meeting
held on Thursday 23 October 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 (PICT, external member)
Alex Jablonowski (external member)

In attendance: Philippa Helme (Board Secretary)
[s.40] (Private Secretary to the Clerk of the House)
[s.40] (Private Secretary to the Clerk of the House
designate)
Chris Ridley (Director of Financial Management, for
item 4)

1. Matters arising from previous meetings

- 1.1. Further to item 6 **Andrew Walker** reported that Janet Rissen was working with departments to investigate the problems which they had experienced with HAIS procure-to-pay over the summer recess.
- 1.2. Further to item 10 **Philippa Helme** said that her office had taken advice from the Director of Procurement on the process to be followed to appoint a consultant to assist the Board in developing the balanced scorecard.

2. Risk and performance

- 2.1. The Board noted that 100% of Members' claims had been paid within the eight day target in the previous quarter. The **Chairman** said that the Freedom of Information team deserved praise for their work in difficult circumstances.
- 2.2. The Board agreed that in future reports the top scoring risks would be presented on an across the organisation basis, and that the Board should review its corporate risks at its November meeting. It was noted that it would be important to ensure common standards both in the terminology used by departments and corporately to describe risks, and in the ways that departments and the Board evaluated them. **Alex Jablonowski** said that based on his experience in other organisations of the viability of

contractor businesses in the current economic climate, the Board should pay particular attention to its evaluation of corporate risk seven, relating to contract and supplier management.

3. Oral up-dates from Director Generals

3.1. Andrew Walker said that:

- 3.1.1. the TUS had invoked the disputes procedure for the pay settlement for bands A-E;
- 3.1.2. he thanked those staff in departments who had volunteered to assist the Department of Resources over the summer recess with the task of preparing information for Members' allowances. He might need to approach departments for further assistance shortly.

3.2. Douglas Millar said that:

- 3.2.1. there would be a new select committee to cover the remit of the Department of Energy and Climate Change;
- 3.2.2. departments' business continuity and disaster recovery plans needed to be finalised by 14 November. He also hoped that departments would test them, at least through a paper exercise.

3.3. John Borley said that:

- 3.3.1. he was preparing a business case for the acquisition of 53 Parliament Street;
- 3.3.2. he had appointed a number of Facilities staff as Area Champions, at Band A level, for each part of the Estate to act as intelligent customers, being pro-active and spotting problems;
- 3.3.3. the new cleaning contract was going well, although there was still unhappiness amongst some cleaning staff.

3.4. Joan Miller said that:

- 3.4.1. PICT would be looking to fill a Business Relationship Manager vacancy through a secondment from the relevant department.
- 3.4.2. the House of Lords were currently undertaking a survey of Members, which included questions on ICT matters.

3.5. John Pullinger said that:

- 3.5.1. JBSB had held a first discussion of an action plan in response to the PICT healthcheck. He proposed to present a paper to the Management Board in due course on governance issues;
- 3.5.2. He had commissioned a senior management review within DIS;

3.5.3. He would be appearing before the Administration Committee on Tuesday next, in an interactive session which would include demonstrations of the website, and a number of outreach initiatives.

3.6. The **Chairman** said that:

3.6.1. He had attended most of the debate on the Commission Annual Report for 2007/08, the tone of which had been largely positive;

3.6.2. The Members Estimate Committee (MEC) had asked the Members Estimate Audit Committee to report to the MEC on options for audit of Members' allowances at the request of the Accounting Officer.

4. Corporate business and financial plans

4.1. The **Chairman** said that the draft plan was by far the best which he had seen, and he wished to record his thanks to the staff who had worked on it. It was also very beneficial to be able to discuss the draft this early in the cycle.

4.2. The Board agreed that, given the current prominence of a number of maintenance issues on what was a world heritage site, it would be appropriate to suggest to the Commission that the supporting task relating to maintenance should become a primary objective, and that the primary objectives should be renamed as "core tasks".

4.3. Philippa Helme said that the corporate business plan was a draft and there was detail which still needed to be filled in and clarified. She asked the Board to approve the format, which was different from that of previous years. The objectives and costs in the business plan were set out with owners at directorate level, in order to promote ownership of the goals amongst the appropriate staff. Following on from bilateral discussions with Board members she proposed that the plan should also include a short section on cross-cutting themes and Director Generals' cross-cutting responsibilities.

4.4. The Board endorsed the general approach in the draft plan, and agreed to forward detailed comments to Philippa Helme in writing. A revised draft would then be circulated for further discussion with Departments.

4.5. Action: *Director Generals to give detailed comments on draft corporate business plan to Philippa Helme by 31 October.*

4.6. Chris Ridley then introduced the financial plan, which covered the years 2009/10 to 2011/12. The plan would be presented to the Commission in December 2008, following prior scrutiny by the Finance and Services Committee.

- 4.7. The Board agreed to present a range of options to the Finance and Services Committee and to the Commission as to how to deliver current services and new priorities for the coming year based on three scenarios: two based on the bids minus a certain percentage; and one based on budget increase to meet all bids and priorities. The **Chairman** said that it would be important for each of the options to include narrative on the effects and impacts of their implementation on services.
- 4.8. It was agreed that each of the bids would be presented with a clear indication of what the Board believed were essential for the business, and what the Board saw as desirable but optional. The paper would also describe what financial risks the Board felt the options presented.
- 4.9. The Board agreed to sign off a final version of the draft financial plan and the paper for the Finance and Services Committee by correspondence.
- 4.10. Finally the Board considered the mid-year financial outturn, and agreed to the proposed transfers suggested within the paper, and that in future Director Generals should sign off their department's in-year forecasts to encourage enhanced accuracy.

5. Staff survey

- 5.1. The **Chairman** said that the Board was being asked to agree to the release of the results of the staff survey to all staff. A draft message from the Chairman to staff which would coincide with the release of the results was circulated to Board members. It was agreed that this captured the key points.
- 5.2. The second element was the agreement of the Management Board's action plan. **Andrew Walker** said that the action plan was a draft that needed more work, and he welcomed Board members' views at the meeting and through further consultation. Once the action plan was agreed at Board level it was proposed to consult on it through staff focus groups.
- 5.3. *Action: Andrew Walker to consult Board members on the draft action plan, which would be agreed by the Board by correspondence.*

6. Equalities Strategy and Standards of Behaviour

- 6.1. The **Chairman** said that a lot of useful work had been undertaken towards the production of a draft equality scheme for the House of Commons. To assist those taking the work forward he suggested, and the Board agreed, that the Board should endorse the three priority areas for

action identified, namely leadership, under-representation and equality impact assessments. The Board also asked that the scheme should make it clear that the main business reason for an equalities scheme was to ensure that the House did not miss out on talent.

6.2. The Board noted that the legal requirement for an equality scheme was for it to have an impact on all who worked at or visited the House, including Members staff and Members as well as staff of the House Service, and this would need to be reflected in the draft.

6.3. *Action: Draft Equality Scheme to be presented to the November Board.*

7. Any other business

7.1. None.

[adjourned at 6 pm

Philippa Helme
Secretary

Malcolm Jack
Chairman

30 October 2008