

# House of Commons Commission

Thirty-second report of the Commission, and report of the  
Administration Estimate Audit Committee

Financial Year 2009/10

# DRAFT

Throughout this report the following terminology is applied in respect of calendar years:

- An oblique indicates a financial year e.g. 2009/10
- A hyphen indicates a Parliamentary session e.g. 2009-10.

The Commission Annual Report for 2009/10 follows the same structure as the Corporate Business Plan 2009/10 in terms of the core and supporting tasks of the House Service.

# House of Commons Commission

## Thirty-second report of the Commission, and report of the Administration Estimate Audit Committee

Financial Year 2009/10

Report presented to the House of Commons pursuant to section 1(3) of the House of Commons  
Administration Act 1978

Ordered by the House of Commons to be printed on 28th July 2010



House of Commons Gallery  
In places the Public Gallery is  
not for visitors with a combined  
or more as required above



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## FOREWORD BY THE SPEAKER

This report covers the final year of the last Parliament. It already seems like a long time ago. The first weeks of the new Parliament have seen significant changes in the procedures and operation of the House and more are expected. But it is important to remember that the welcome recent developments have depended on work done during the period covered by this report, such as the preparations for implementing the recommendations of the Wright report on *Rebuilding the House* and the planning for the induction of new Members.

Other ways in which the foundations for change were laid include the Equality Scheme, new environmental targets, new arrangements for parliamentary broadcasting, the planning for a workplace nursery, the first steps towards making the House's international work more strategic and expansion of the House's education work. Another highlight was the successful organisation of the sitting of the UK Youth Parliament in the Chamber.

It would be wrong to look only at what was new during 2009/10. The House's work is made possible by the diligence of its staff in maintaining existing services. It is a tribute to the staff of the House that those services have been provided with undiminished commitment in a year of unprecedented difficulty and controversy for the House, and I thank them for this. I also thank my fellow Commissioners for their hard work and wise advice during the year.

2010/11 will pose new difficulties because of the Commission's decision that substantial savings should be made by 2012/13. The challenge will be to achieve those savings at the same time as making the House more effective in holding the Government to account and engaging better with the public. The new strategy for the House Service sets out clearly our aim that the House be 'valued as the central institution in our democracy: effective in holding the Government to account, scrutinising legislation, and representing the diverse views of the electorate.'

Restoring respect for the House will not be quick or easy, and will depend on every Member as well as on the Commission and House staff. This report demonstrates the determination of the Commission and House Service to play their part in making it possible for public confidence in the House to revive.

**John Bercow** Speaker of the House



## INTRODUCTION BY THE CLERK OF THE HOUSE AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE

to be approved

This report describes the wide range of activity carried out by the House of Commons Service during the financial year 2009-10, the final year of the 2005 Parliament. It was – as we all are aware – a turbulent year, marked by a change of Speaker, continued media focus on Members’ allowances, and the decision to establish the new Independent Parliamentary Standards Authority, as well as uncertainty about when the General Election would take place and what changes it might bring. But it is important to remember that life went on, with staff continuing to carry out successfully the tasks set for the House Service – supporting the work of the Chamber and Committees, assisting Members and their staff in carrying out their work, informing the public about Parliament, maintaining the Parliamentary Estate, and doing all the supporting tasks needed to keep the House of Commons running.

There were some major new initiatives. The Commission endorsed the first House of Commons Equality Scheme, and agreed a statement setting out clearly what Members can expect from the House Service and what is expected in return. The two Houses agreed an Environmental Strategy, with challenging targets. A great deal of work was involved in managing the transition to IPSA, ensuring that the services provided by the Department of Resources were maintained at the same time as staff were transferring to the new body. Plans were made to implement a number of procedural reforms in the new Parliament. And, across the House Service, staff prepared for the General Election, supporting retiring Members and planning for the arrival of a large number of new Members.

A 25 year Estate Strategy and delivery plan was developed, identifying the major works that are needed to maintain the Palace of Westminster and other buildings in the Parliamentary Estate so that they continue to meet the needs of a modern Parliament while preserving their heritage for future generations. Work carried out included overhauling the mechanical and electrical infrastructure, repairing the cast iron roofs and improving fire safety. And plans were put in place for a nursery to open on the Estate in September 2010.



Outreach and educational activity has continued to expand, both at Westminster and in the regions. The number of students visiting Parliament continues to rise, and the first meeting of the UK Youth Parliament in the House of Commons Chamber took place in October. We hosted the NATO Parliamentary Assembly's Annual Session in Edinburgh, and the Commonwealth Serjeants at Arms Conference at Westminster, both in July 2009; and an internal seminar on Parliamentary Research Services at Westminster in September. The House of Commons Information Office celebrated its 30th anniversary, and the number of FOI requests responded to more than doubled.

The year also marked the beginning of a new era of tighter financial management. Recognising the importance of the House playing its part in responding to the constraints on the public finances, the Management Board proposed to the Commission that the House Administration reduce its resource budget by 9% by 2012/13, as well as absorbing the costs of inflation. Reducing our costs, while maintaining and, where possible, improving services, will be our top challenge in the year ahead.

I would like to thank all staff of the House of Commons and PICT for the contribution they made during 2009/10 and am confident of their continuing commitment in meeting the challenges of the new Parliament.

**Malcolm Jack** Clerk of the House and Chief Executive

## Commission



**Rt Hon John Bercow MP**  
Chair  
The Speaker



**Rt Hon Sir George Young MP**



**Rt Hon Rosie Winterton MP**



**Sir Stuart Bell MP**  
Spokesman



**Nick Harvey MP**

## Management Board



**Malcolm Jack**  
Chair  
Chief Executive and Clerk  
of the House



**Robert Rogers**  
Director General,  
Chamber and Committee  
Services



**John Borley**  
Director General,  
Facilities



**John Pullinger**  
Director General,  
Information Services



**Andrew Walker**  
Director General,  
Resources



**Joan Miller**  
Director, PICT  
Joint Department



**Alex Jablonowski**  
External Board Member

## HOW THE HOUSE IS GOVERNED

The framework for the governance of the House of Commons was established by the *House of Commons (Administration) Act 1978* which set up the House of Commons Commission. The Commission employs the staff of the House, ensures that their terms and conditions remain broadly in line with those of civil servants, appoints an Accounting Officer, lays the Estimate (budget) for House of Commons services and determines the structure and functions of the departments of the House.

It is also required by the Act to publish this annual report. Members of the Commission are also members of the Members Estimate Committee (MEC), which is responsible for oversight of expenditure on Members' salaries and allowances, for which a separate report and accounts are published.

The membership of the House of Commons Commission is composed according to section 1(2) of the *House of Commons (Administration) Act*. At the start of the financial year 2009/10, the membership was as follows:

- The Speaker, The Rt Hon Michael J Martin MP (by virtue of his office) (Chairman);
- The Leader of the House, The Rt Hon Harriet Harman QC MP (by virtue of her office);
- Alan Duncan MP (Shadow Leader of the House of Commons, nominated by the Leader of the Opposition);
- Sir Stuart Bell MP (also Chairman of the Finance and Services Committee);
- Nick Harvey MP (Commission Spokesman);
- The Rt Hon David Maclean MP.

The Rt Hon John Bercow MP succeeded the Rt Hon Michael J Martin MP as Speaker on 22 June 2009 and became chairman of the Commission from this date for the remainder of the financial year.

The Rt Hon Sir George Young MP, Shadow Leader of the House of Commons, replaced Alan Duncan MP as the Member nominated by the Leader of the Opposition on 9 September 2009 and was a member of the Commission for the remainder of the financial year.

The Commission is attended by the Clerk of the House, who is the Chief Executive and Accounting Officer of the House of Commons Service. Malcolm Jack served in this capacity throughout the year. The Secretary of the Commission is Dorian Gerhold and Rob Cope is the Assistant Secretary.



## Activities of the Commission

The Commission met 14 times during the year. Minutes of Commission meetings are available through its internet pages. During the year it:

- Agreed the House's Equality Scheme
- Endorsed a new environmental strategy for Parliament and agreed new environmental targets
- Agreed new arrangements for parliamentary broadcasting, to begin in July 2011.
- Agreed that a nursery facility should be established and begin operating in September 2010.
- Endorsed a proposal from the Management Board that the House Service should reduce its resource budget by 9% by 2012/13.
- Agreed proposals to establish an International Relations Directorate
- Reported to the House on the proposal that the 2,700 or so Members' staff should be employed directly by the House
- Approved new rules on travel by members of delegations to international parliamentary assemblies
- Agreed the demarcation of functions between the House and IPSA
- Received the report of a study it had commissioned of options for decanting the two Houses in connection with modernisation of the mechanical and electrical works in the Palace.

The Commission agreed an Administration Estimate of £231 million for 2010/11<sup>1</sup>. This is the first step towards achieving the planned budget cuts of 9% by 2012/13.

## Questions to the Commission

Parliamentary questions addressed to the Commission were answered by Nick Harvey MP. During the year he replied to 14 oral questions and gave 234 written answers.

On 3 December 2009 there was a debate in government time in Westminster Hall on the 2008/09 annual report of the Commission (HC 912 2008-09), the sixth such debate.

<sup>1</sup> On 21 June 2010 the Commission agreed a revised Estimate of £219 million.

## Finance and Services Committee

The Finance and Services Committee of the House of Commons is established under Standing Order No. 144. It has responsibility for the preparation of the draft budgets for the House Administration and advises the Commission on the financial and administrative implications of recommendations by the Administration Committee.

The Committee was chaired throughout 2009/10 by a member of the Commission, Sir Stuart Bell MP, and had 10 other members, including the Chairman of Ways and Means and the Chairman of the Administration Committee.

The Committee's business has included the annual cycle of spending plans and outturn, works spending, security spending and proposals for e-petitioning.

## Administration Committee

The Administration Committee considers the services provided to MPs by the House Service and represents the views of MPs to the Commission, the Speaker and others. It also looks at services provided to the public by the House, including visitor facilities, the Parliament website and education services.

During 2009/10 the Committee advised the Commission and the Speaker on arrangements for use of the House's facilities for civil ceremonies and on how services such as the provision of office accommodation and of IT should be managed to cope with the anticipated influx of new Members following the general election. The regulation of all-party groups and changes in catering arrangements remained significant issues on the Committee's agenda.

## Administration Estimate Audit Committee

The Commission appoints the members of the AEAC and approves its terms of reference. The AEAC's annual report can be found on pages [XX](#).

## Management Board

Management of the House of Commons Service is delegated by the Commission to the House of Commons Management Board under the leadership of the Clerk of the House and Chief Executive, Malcolm Jack. His functions also include Accounting Officer and Corporate Officer, and he is responsible for ensuring proper stewardship of resources and for establishing an appropriate system of internal controls through a system of delegations.

The Management Board's role is to lead the House of Commons Service by setting its strategic aims, priorities, values and standards, in accordance with the decisions of the House of Commons Commission; approving business and financial plans, ensuring controls, managing risk, monitoring performance and making corporate policy decisions.

In addition to the Clerk, the other members of the Management Board at the beginning of 2009/10 were the Directors General of the four House departments: Douglas Millar (Chamber and Committee Services), John Pullinger (Information Services), Andrew Walker (Resources) and John Borley (Facilities); Joan Miller (Director of Parliamentary ICT) and Alex Jablonowski. Douglas Millar retired in October 2009 and was succeeded by Robert Rogers.



## CORE TASK 1 SUPPORTING THE CHAMBER AND COMMITTEES

To provide the advice and services that enable the House and its committees to conduct their business effectively

- **146** sitting days
- **4,882** new amendments, clauses and schedules tabled
- **413** General Committee meetings supported
- **364** departmental Select Committee reports published
- **99** Research Papers (RPs) published
- **58%** of questions e-tabled

## Supporting the legislative process

Through the Legislation Directorate the Commons Service supports the House’s consideration of legislation. The Public Bill Office (PBO) examines every bill before introduction to ensure that it complies with the rules of the House. At the committee and report stages of a bill, the PBO receives amendments (and helps Members to draft them) and advises the Chair on selection and grouping.

During 2009/10 the House considered 33 Government bills, and 115 private Members’ bills (although most of these did not progress beyond second reading stage) and 10 private bills. The PBO missed its objective of a 100% rate in processing and printing Government bills in accordance with instructions from Parliamentary Counsel only in respect of two minor errors. The Public and Private Bill Offices jointly handled 4,882 amendments, new clauses and schedules to bills at committee and report stages, and achieved its objective of printing all of them on the day they were handed in.

Members wishing to table a private Members’ bill can call on the advice of the PBO; and assistant in drafting it. During 2009/10, all Members who requested this service (in relation to 34 bills) reported that they were satisfied with the PBO’s work.

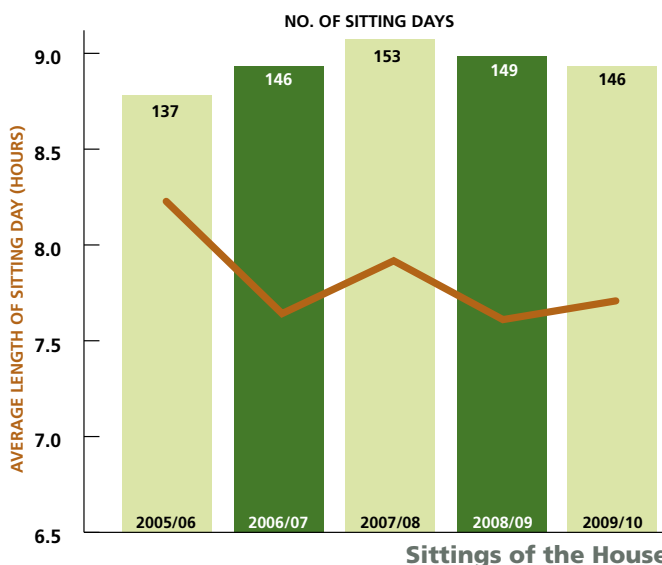
The Public Bill Office also provided support for three meetings of the Welsh Grand Committee and for nine meetings of Regional Grand Committees, eight of which took place away from Westminster. There were also 114 meetings of Delegated Legislation Committees and 16 meetings of European Committees.

## Informing debate by the House

The Library’s objective is to produce a comprehensive briefing (either a research paper or standard note) for the second readings and report stages of all major Government bills and the top seven private Members’ bills in the ballot. This was achieved in all but one case.

Providing some flexibility in the type of briefing produced has enabled the Library to provide briefings at other stages of a bill’s passage. This approach bore fruit in the last few days of the 2008-09 session, when briefings were produced for the consideration of Lords’ amendments to five bills. Despite the brevity of the 2009-10 session, a significant number of private Members’ bills made progress and papers were produced on a number of private Members’ bills outside the top seven in the ballot.

The Library also produced 193 debate packs during the year (4% fewer than in 2008/09) to help inform the House in advance of non-legislative debates held in the Chamber and in Westminster Hall. The Vote Office provides the House with the



Sittings of the House sitting days in the Chamber and average length of sitting day

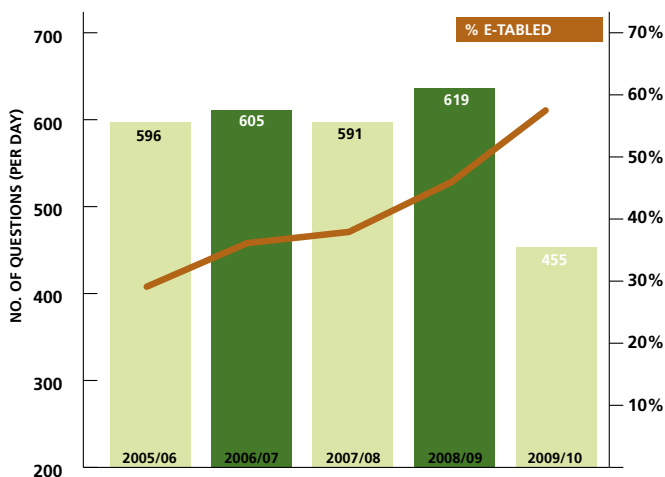


papers necessary for the conduct of its business, and also obtains other papers on request from Members.

During 2009/10, the Vote Office succeeded in operating a no-fail policy in providing papers to support the House’s work, meaning that there were no suspensions of the House or its committees because of the unavailability of the correct documents.

In terms of availability, current papers were immediately available in the main Vote Office 99.98% of the time, just missing its 100% target. The target of 98% for the other Vote Office outlets was exceeded, with 99.85% availability. In regard to timeliness, requests for non-parliamentary papers were processed within 24 hours 99.73% of the time.

In addition, the Vote Office’s Print Services arm provided the capability to print essential business papers for the House, and meet the domestic needs of the House Service.



**tabled**  
average number of questions per sitting day and % of questions e-tabled

### Recording the House’s work

The Journal Office (JO) is the procedural guardian of the House of Commons. It receives all papers formally laid before the House and provides advice on their orderliness, as well as on parliamentary privilege and freedom of information.

Every decision of the House is recorded by the JO, which produces the formal record of the House’s proceedings: the Votes and Proceedings. During 2009/10, the JO made 11 significant errors in 1,242 pages of the Votes and Proceedings.

The Official Report Directorate (Hansard) is responsible for providing accurate and timely edited verbatim reports of the proceedings of the House, Westminster Hall and Committees, processing and printing written answers to questions, written ministerial statements, petitions and ministerial corrections, operating the annunciator service and, (through the Parliamentary Broadcasting Unit) overseeing broadcasting and webcasting of both Houses and providing the audio-visual archive service.

During 2009/10, Hansard staff exceeded by a wide margin their targets for accuracy. For example, in recording the debates of the House, they made only one error per 26 columns (target: one error per 15 columns) in their total output of just over 20,000 columns of debate.

The Vote Office manages the contract with The Stationery Office to meet the House’s printing and publishing requirements, including the publication of Hansard and the daily Vote Bundle. Good relations were supported through weekly liaison meetings, while ring-fenced printing and publishing expenditure was below the budget forecast.



## Assisting scrutiny by the House

The Journal Office (JO) is the procedural guardian of the House of Commons. It receives all papers formally laid before the House and provides advice on their orderliness, as well as on parliamentary privilege and freedom of information.

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## Supporting scrutiny by select committees

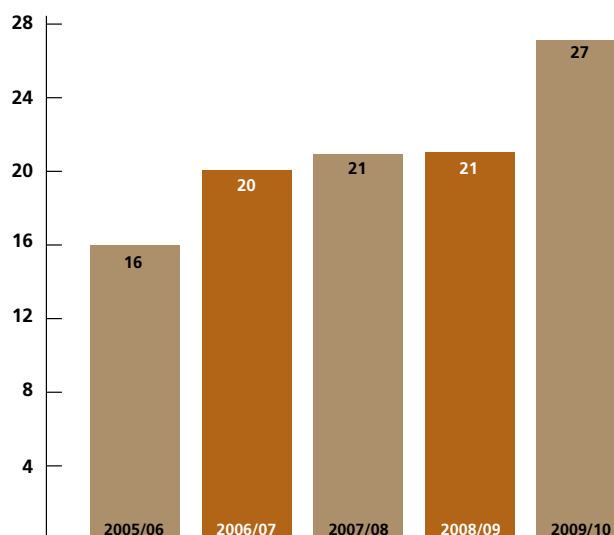
Through the Committee Office, the House Service provides secretariats to the House's select committees. While a small number of committees cross departmental boundaries (e.g. Public Accounts and Environmental Audit Committees), the majority shadow a government department and consider its spending, policies and administration.

The committee secretariats often include specialists who provide the committee with in-depth expertise on their subject area. The secretariats are aided by the Scrutiny Unit which provides specialist support on financial matters and pre-legislative scrutiny and additional resource when required.

During 2009/10, there were 1,237 select committee meetings (compared to 1,135 in 2008/09). 364 reports were published by departmental select committees.

In addition to drafting reports and providing briefings, the secretariats arrange evidence sessions and organise fact-finding visits for their select committees, both in the UK and overseas.

Committee inquiries have covered a wide variety of topics including adapting to climate change; alcohol; future for local and regional media, and parliamentary reform.



**Average debate columns without significant error**  
(target: one error per 13 columns)



## Broader support to the House

The House Service provides support to the House's work, by informing the House of developments regarding European Union legislation.

The House's National Parliament Office in Brussels provides an "intelligence" service on developing EU issues, and a liaison service with EU institutions, for the Joint Committee on Statutory Instruments; the Standing Committee on Statutory Instruments; the Joint Committee on Human Rights; the Regulatory reform Committee and for departmental select committees.

The Overseas Office's European Section provided support to Members appointed by the House to international assemblies, including the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, the NATO Parliamentary Assembly (PA), and the Assembly of the Western European Union (WEU).

The Overseas Office also played a role in promoting cooperation with other parliaments and assemblies (see supporting task 5, [\[page reference\]](#)).

The Serjeant at Arms Directorate ensured that security of the House and its committees was maintained during 2009/10. This involved close working with other staff in DCCS to ensure that the level of security was appropriate for debates and committee meetings to prevent interruption (see supporting task 2, [\[page reference\]](#)).

The Department of Facilities maintained the chamber and committee rooms, as part of its wider remit to maintain the Estate (see supporting task 4, [\[page reference\]](#)).

## Supporting the Speaker

The six staff in the Speaker's Office support the Speaker across the full range of his official duties. These include: chairing proceedings in the Chamber; chairing the administration of the House of Commons (the House of Commons Commission); representing the House in State ceremonies; welcoming visitors to the House and acting as an advocate for the House of Commons and for parliamentary democracy.


In particular, the Speaker's Office supports the Speaker in determining when to call Members to speak in debate. It keeps comprehensive records of Members' success and failure in being called in debate, following Ministerial statements and at Prime Minister's Questions. These statistics are always taken into account on a subsequent occasion.

The office also organises the weekly ballots for adjournment debates and debates in Westminster Hall, and should be contacted by any Member seeking an urgent question or emergency debate, or planning to raise a point of order in the Chamber.

The Speaker also plans to take part in a variety of public speaking engagements and visits around the UK in the next 12 months in line with his aim to increase the engagement of the House with the public. The office will provide the necessary support for this programme.



Following the publication of the Wright Report in November 2009, the House agreed on 24 February and 4 March 2010 to changes which would affect the operation of select committees in the new Parliament. These included the election of most committee chairs by the House and endorsement of the principle that parties should elect members of the committees by secret ballot.



## CORE TASK 2 SUPPORTING MEMBERS AND THEIR STAFF

To provide the advice and services that enable individual Members (and their staff) to perform their parliamentary duties effectively

- **16,421** research enquiries to the Library
- **128,589** items added to PIMS
- **3,383** Standard Notes available online
- **39,111** PICT Service Desk cases resolved
- **87.5%** PICT Service Desk cases completed within deadline

## Delivering information and research

In addition to briefing on legislative and other debates (see [page reference]), the House of Commons Library provides research, information and specialist briefing services for Members and their staff to help them perform their parliamentary duties.

During 2009/10, the Library recorded that it had contact with 98% of all Members, and that 74% of Members used the Library on at least 10 occasions, narrowly missing the Library’s target (75%) for reach of its services. This was mainly due to a moderate reduction in enquiry numbers at the end of the year as the General Election approached.

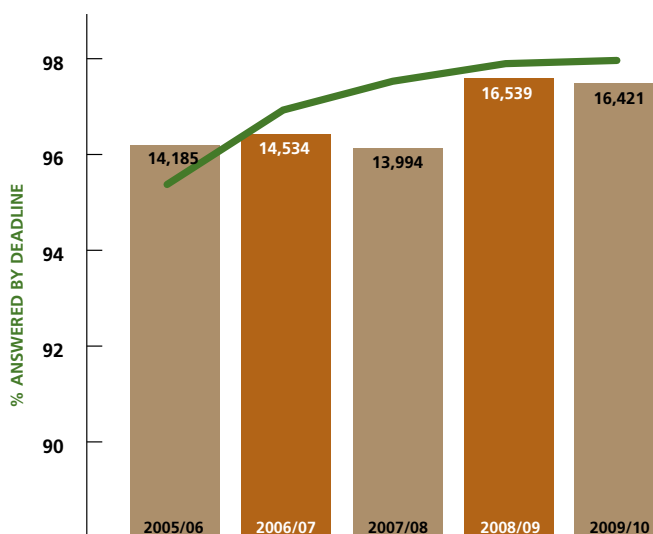
In 2009/10, the Library received over 16,400 enquiries – almost the same as in 2008/09. The targets for answering deadline enquiries on time and other enquiries within 10 working days were exceeded. A review was undertaken looking at both the guidance available to staff on constituency-related enquiries and also the publicity about the service given to Members. A number of actions were agreed to ensure that there was clarity about the scope of the service after the election.

In addition, the Library organised 23 topical talks for Members and their staff, given by Library specialists and external speakers. Among the topics covered were the Lisbon Treaty, green taxes, the 2011 Census and benefits for single parents.

The Library offers a book and video loan service, and other reference services such as a broad range of national, local and foreign newspapers and magazines and extensive online sources. As part of the 2009 Survey of Services Members and their staff were asked about their satisfaction with 10 core services. Of these “Information and Research Services provided by the Library and POST” received the highest satisfaction ratings amongst both groups.

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The Parliamentary Office of Science and Technology continued to provide briefings to the House about matters in its field. During 2009/10, it produced 25 “POSTnotes” that provided briefings on a wide range of subjects, and also supported the work of select committees.



**Enquiries to Library**  
total number of recorded enquiries, % answered by deadline



## Providing ICT support

PICT, which is a joint department of the Commons and Lords, is responsible for providing the IT infrastructure and support to help Members and their staff (and staff of both Houses). It also provides laptops, printers and PDAs for Members. Funding for these comes from the Members Estimate.

There are over 6,500 users of the Parliamentary network, over 2,500 of whom are not located on the parliamentary Estate. PICT supports 110 applications, and receives over 300 calls to its Service Desk each day.

During 2009/10 as a whole the PICT Service Desk resolved over 32,000 support cases logged by Members and their staff. 89.9% of cases were resolved within the deadline, narrowly missing the target figure of 90%.

An Extended Business Service team is in place to provide improved support outside of core hours, and PICT staff are also available in the Members' Centre.

A priority for the year was to plan and deliver improved ICT services for Members and their staff, including:

- A new virtual private network (VPN)-based remote access service
- A new broadband contract
- Redevelopment of the mobile computing service to focus on Smartphones. The greater flexibility offered by the new arrangements has proved very popular with Members and is a cost effective way of delivering remote mobile connectivity.
- Extension of the range of printers from which Members can select – for their central allocation or to purchase

## Keeping Members informed

The Central Communications Team in the Office of the Chief Executive is responsible for communications from the House Service to Members and their staff. This is done by a combination of printed material – leaflets and posters – as well as email bulletins and intranet content. The team played a key role in coordinating information on dissolution arrangements for Members, and in preparing information for new and returning Members after the election.

The team has received very positive feedback from Members throughout the year – in particular in relation to publications and printed material. The *What's on* campaigns have boosted attendance at the events promoted.



## Supporting services on the Estate

The House Service also provides a number of other services to support Members and their staff while they are on the Parliamentary Estate, for example:

- catering;
- accommodation and related services; and
- medical services.

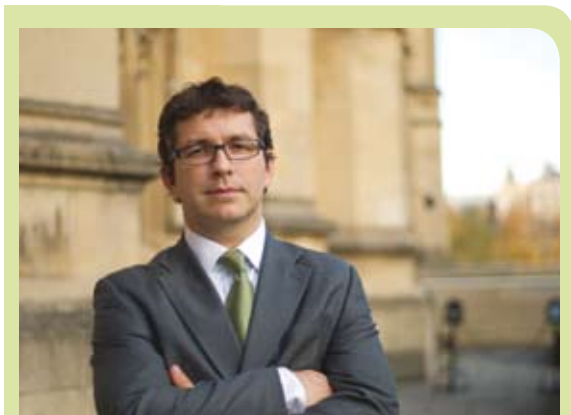
Postal services for Members, and the House of Commons more generally, are provided under contract by Royal Mail. The targets for mail delivery are for 62% of mail delivered by 8am, 77% by 10am and 100% by 2pm. While the 8am target was regularly exceeded during the year, the demanding 100% target for 2pm was not often achieved.

The Parliamentary Safety, Health and Wellbeing Service (SHWS) provides specialist medical advice, guidance and support for Members:

- An acute GP service is available, offering help to Members who suffer health problems and are not able to access their own GP due to their work in Parliament.
- An occupational health consultant provides advice on occupational health issues for Members.
- The practice nurse, based in the Palace on each working day, provides advice on illness and injuries occurring at work.
- Vaccinations, medication and advice for official overseas travel are provided, via the SHWS, at St Thomas' Hospital.

In addition, the SHWS provided 127 medical screenings for Members in 2009/10.

More information about services such as catering and accommodation can be found in the section on supporting task 2 ([\[page reference\]](#)).





## Processing pay and allowances/ operational support for Members

The Operations Directorate in the Department of Resources was responsible for validating and processing allowances claims submitted by Members, the House administration's invoices and for providing all payroll services. It also administered pensions and provided HR services to Members.

On average the Enquiries and Advice Team dealt with 3,250 calls each month from Members and their staff.

90.5% of Members' claims were paid within eight days – below the House Service's target of 99%.

Significant additional demands were placed on the Operations Directorate during 2009/10 as a result of concerns about the payment of allowances. While the Legg Review of past payments of Additional Costs Allowance (the "second home allowance") was conducted separately from the work of the Directorate, staff provided assistance where necessary and were responsible for managing the flow of repayments that resulted. By the end of March 2010 all but £46,000 of the £1.12 million recommended to be repaid following appeals had been repaid, or were subject to a legally rebinding agreement to repay.

Following the Royal Assent of the Parliamentary Standards Act 2009 work was undertaken to prepare for the establishment of the new Independent Parliamentary Standards Authority (IPSA), and transferring responsibility for paying Members' salaries and allowances, including pay for Members' staff, to the new body. A small project team and other staff in the Department of Resources worked with the IPSA implementation team, and IPSA itself to transfer:

- 29 staff to help set up and work in the new organisation;
- information and data about Members and their staff that IPSA would need to operate their new systems; and
- knowledge about the existing salaries and allowances systems.

Much of the work, which was still ongoing at the end of March 2010, was undertaken through a transition project jointly managed by the Department of Resources and IPSA.



## Services for retiring and defeated Members


In 2009/10 the House Service planned and provided a range of services for Members who stood down at the General Election, or were defeated. This included:

- pay and pension advice;
- information about resettlement grants and the winding-up allowance;
- details on redundancy payments for Members' staff;
- guidance on IT equipment, email accounts and telephones;
- information about offices and removals;
- advice on the treatment of personal papers and correspondence.

Guidance was provided through a range of publications (both in hard copy and available on the intranet), and one-to-one appointments were also available for Members to discuss financial arrangements.



The Members' Centre in Portcullis House provides Members and their staff with face-to-face access to staff in most House of Commons Departments, all in one location.



### CORE TASK 3 INFORMATION FOR THE PUBLIC

To promote public knowledge and understanding of the work and role of Parliament through the provision of information and access.

- **121,728** visitors to the Chamber galleries
- **96,594** visitors to the Summer Opening
- **40,967** enquiries to the Information Office
- **40,179** young people came on education visits
- **48.7** million website requests
- **856** Freedom of Information requests



## Promoting Parliament in schools

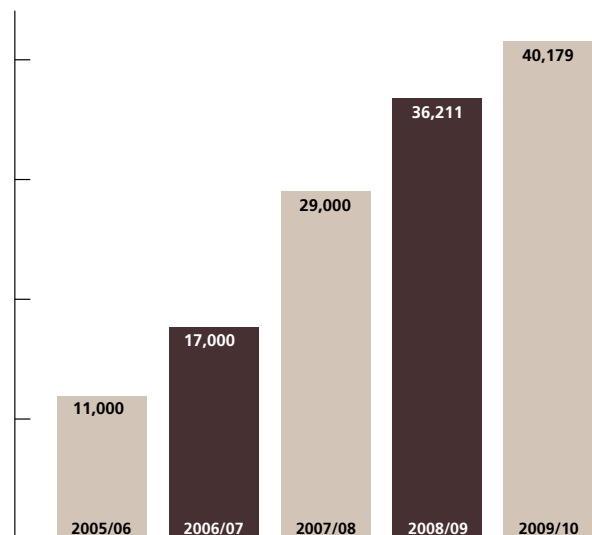
Parliament’s Education Service enabled a new record number of students to visit Parliament in 2009/10 through its programmes: the total of 40,117 significantly exceeded the target of 37,000 set at the beginning of the year, and represented an increase of almost 11% compared to 2008/09. Contrary to initial concerns, swine flu did not have a significant impact on visitor numbers, although snow disruption did lead to many visits being cancelled in February 2010.

The Education Service trains teachers, runs teacher seminar days, and, in 2009/10, increased to 40 the number of citizenship teachers participating in its week-long Teacher Institute training course, held at Westminster. The Education Service also works in partnership with the BBC and the Institute of Citizenship on the annual BBC School Question Time programme, providing resources and teacher training.

In addition, Education web and online resources have continued to develop. A major new interactive online game aimed at 11-14 year olds was developed (with the involvement of Members) and launched in January 2010 as MP for a Week.

The transport subsidy scheme for schools has helped encourage schools from outside London and the South East to visit Parliament. A report on the pilot system was presented to Committees in July 2009 and it was agreed that the scheme should become permanent. However, demand for places is still intense and not all schools who wish to

come are able to secure a place. With the currently available accommodation, there is a natural limit of around 40,000 on the Education Service core programme. An Education Centre is due to be completed in 2013; this will enable Parliament to receive 100,000 learners per year.



Number of Education Service visitors



### Welcoming visitors

Around a million people visit Parliament each year, most of whom enter through the Cromwell Green Entrance. Once through the security checks, all visitors are given a temporary photopass, and their first stop is the new Information Desk in Westminster Hall.

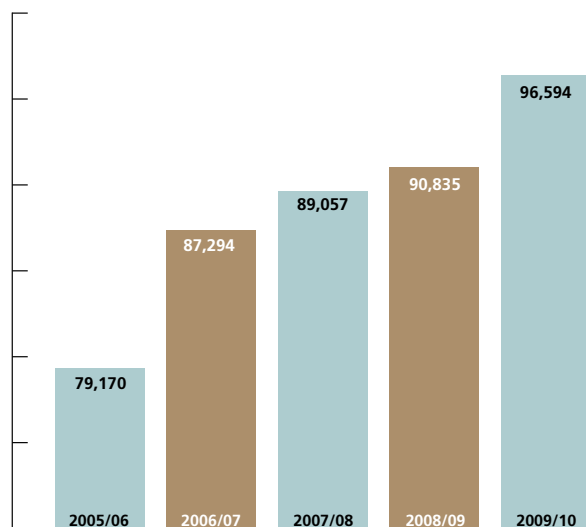
The desk is staffed by Information Office staff and Visitor Assistants, who provide help and guidance inside the Palace, including managing queues and access to the public galleries, and helping lead tours. Other support comes from the Central Tours Office, which organises tours, and the Admission Order Office responsible for tickets for guests and access to the Chamber’s galleries. Cafes and souvenir shops also provide services to visitors.

Visitor Services participates in the Association of Leading Visitor Attractions (ALVA) industry benchmark surveys (conducted by “mystery shoppers”), which demonstrate that Visitor Services staff at Parliament score among the highest in the industry.

The self-financing summer opening programme attracted 96,594 visitors, exceeding the target of 92,000, an increase of over 6% compared to 2008/09. Some 112,744 people undertook Member-sponsored tours; demand is higher and is limited only by capacity.

Developments to the parliamentary website mean that people can also undertake “virtual” tours of parliament, including the Chambers of both Houses; St Stephen’s Hall and the Undercroft Chapel; the Clock Tower; Victoria Tower, the libraries and Portcullis House.

House staff also assisted with the opening of Portcullis House and Westminster Hall as part of the Open House London Weekend in September 2009.



Tickets sold for Summer Opening of Parliament



## Taking Parliament into the regions

While continuing to welcome visitors of all ages to Westminster, Parliamentary Outreach consists of a team of regional outreach officers working in partnership with national and local organisations to explain the work and role of Parliament and to promote engagement with it. Initially launched in October 2008, Parliamentary Outreach built on its successful first year of work in two start-up regions to roll out regional outreach events across all twelve regions of the UK.

Partnership working continues to play a central part in the public engagement strategy. Parliamentary Outreach works with voluntary organisations and their national and regional networks. This year Parliamentary Outreach and the National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO) jointly ran the NCVO's annual conference in Methodist Central Hall, at which Mr Speaker delivered the keynote address. Parliamentary Outreach also launched a joint training programme with the Citizens Advice Bureaux. Outreach staff have also worked with select committees to organise regional evidence sessions and also to encourage community groups to submit evidence to committees.

Eight regional select committees were set up in March 2009 (with a ninth, covering London, being nominated in December 2009). They held 82 meetings, many in their respective regions, and produced 16 substantive reports.





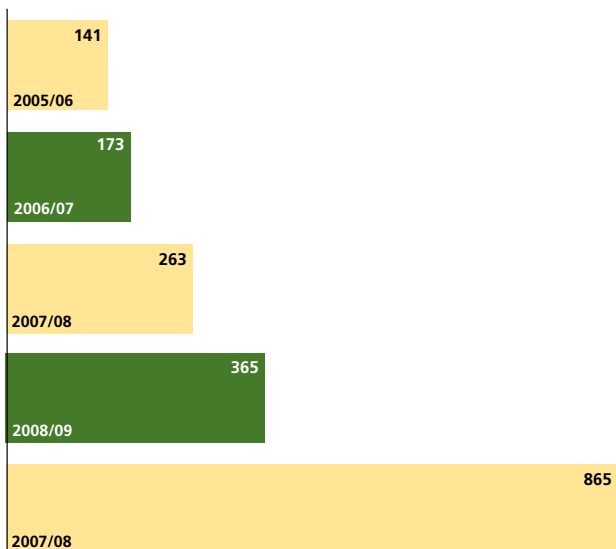
## Improving information on the internet

Parliament’s website is a key channel for extending the reach of all public information services. During the course of the year major new web services and features have been launched, including:

- new designs for the website, launched in April 2009;
- improved presentation of *Hansard* online;
- online forums to support select committee inquiries, for example on the role of prison officers for the Home Affairs Committee;
- topic pages to facilitate easier subject access to material;
- a new search engine;
- an improved *Find Your MP* service;
- MPs’ allowances pages/database.

The House Service’s engagement work extends to online activity too, taking Parliament out to other websites, as demonstrated by the Treasury Committee’s successful consumer credit inquiry thread on the MoneySavingExpert.com website. That website is viewed by 8 million visitors a month, and the Committee inquiry thread received over 3,000 unique viewers, produced over 60 pieces of evidence, and over 2,000 votes in an online poll.

The award winning films *You’ve Got the Power*, which had been refreshed, updated and produced on DVD, were split up and edited clips launched on Parliament’s YouTube channel and on the Education Service’s newly launched embedded video player and video pages.



Freedom of Information requests

## Making information about the House accessible

The House Service provides a number of information services that complement the [www.parliament.uk](http://www.parliament.uk) website, including the House of Commons Information Office (HCIO), its Freedom of Information (FoI) publication scheme, and the Broadcasting Unit.

The House of Commons Information Office (HCIO) celebrated its 30th anniversary during the year. An HCIO Strategic Review was conducted and was being finalised at year end. Closer collaborative working with the Web Centre and the Media and Communications Service will result, which has been reflected in physically locating those three teams together in 4 Millbank. Following a decision to aim for “real-time” answering of email enquiries (arising from the HCIO review), early performance statistics show that 80% of emails are being answered within one working day.

The Office also produces information about the House in print and on the website. It manages the production of the new voters’ guide, which is sent to all young people around their 18th birthday. It underwent a “refresh” during 2009, and was relaunched with a covering letter by the new Speaker as PopVox along with accompanying web pages. Fewer copies were sent out than had been budgeted for due to difficulties surrounding the use of Electoral Roll data.

The number of FoI requests handled by the Information Rights and Information Security Service team more than doubled in 2009/10 – 856 compared to 365 in 2008/09, largely as a result of the interest in Members’ expenses.

Notwithstanding the increase in volume, 90% of FoI enquiries were answered in time, meaning that they either received an answer within the standard 20 working day deadline or within an agreed extension period, compared to the target for Government departments of 87%.

The Broadcasting Unit has continued to oversee the broadcast production coverage of proceeding from both main Chambers, Westminster Hall sittings and Committee meetings in both Houses. As well as the gavel-to-gavel coverage in the main Chambers this has also included coverage of 255 Committees in Session 2008-09 and 131 Committees in Session 2009-10. The Unit also undertook the business planning and procurement of new broadcast cameras for both Chambers to be installed in August 2010.

In the area of webcasting the Broadcasting Unit has continued to develop Parliament’s infrastructure with the addition of eight new unattended web camera systems for Committee coverage in both Houses during Summer 2009.

Development work has also continued to add functionality and enhance searchability on the [www.parliamentlive.tv](http://www.parliamentlive.tv) website. New licensing arrangements were negotiated with PARBUL to permit Members to post their contributions on wider video hosting sites such as YouTube, and the licensing issues surrounding embedding coverage were concluded early in 2010/11.



## Working with the media

The Media and Communications Service has cross-House responsibility for working with the media, with a particular focus on select committees. During 2009/10, the MCS actively promoted 243 select committee reports and 413 evidence sessions. The MCS team worked with the outreach officers to promote select committee visits as well as more general promotion of select committee inquiries, and worked closely with the Web Centre to produce more and better news content for the parliamentary website.

MCS procured a new media monitoring system, which has been especially useful in enabling improvements to the service which is provided to Select Committees. Towards the end of the year, the focus shifted to preparations for the new Parliament: how to ensure the media would be well briefed on the induction of new Members, and on procedural issues such as the election of the Speaker and Deputy Speakers.





## Making the history of Parliament accessible

The Parliamentary Archives, based in the House of Lords and providing a service for both Houses, is responsible for archiving Parliamentary material and making that information available to the public. In 2009/10, there were 925 visits to the Archives' search room, and 5,539 enquiries were answered. In addition, its online catalogue received over 90,000 visits.

The *People and Parliament: Connecting with Communities* programme was launched in July 2009 with an exhibition in Westminster Hall. The intention is engage the public with the history and work of Parliament through community-based activities. These explore the interaction of people and Parliament using historic records held at Westminster and in regional archives. The exhibition included the longest Act of Parliament held by the Parliamentary Archives, the

Land Tax Act of 1821, as well as exhibits loaned by the six regional partners who are participating in the programme. Some 20,000 people visited the exhibition, and – in a satisfaction survey – 72% of respondents said that the exhibition made them want to find out more about Parliament.

Further information about the work of the Parliamentary Archives can be found under core task 4 [\[page reference\]](#).



The UK Youth Parliament met in the Chamber of the House of Commons in October 2009, with 328 Members of the Youth Parliament attending. Proceedings were chaired by Mr Speaker and an edited highlights package was placed on YouTube.



## CORE TASK 4

# MAINTAINING THE PARLIAMENTARY ESTATE

To maintain the heritage and integrity of the Palace of Westminster and other buildings, objects and documents for the benefit of future generations

- ?? Estates works projects undertaken
- ??£m invested in work projects

## Working to maintain the Estate

The Parliamentary Estate includes the Palace of Westminster and a number of outbuildings which together provide the working space necessary for the House of Commons to function.

The Palace of Westminster is also a Grade One listed building and forms part of a UNESCO World Heritage Site. It is also a major tourist attraction. Maintaining and updating it, for example to install IT communication wiring, is therefore an immense challenge.

During 2009/10 a twenty-five year Estate strategy was developed which prioritises key longer-term activities. A number of major works projects were undertaken during the year:

- Work started on the mechanical & electrical modernisation project, by undertaking repairs to the Palace of Westminster plant rooms.
- A number of fire safety upgrades were completed during the 2009 summer recess, including the installation of automatic detection and alarms in previously unprotected areas.
- The south roof of Speaker's Court was replaced as part of the major programme of renovating the 160-year old cast iron roofs. Lessons learned from this project will be used on the remaining phases of the cast iron roofs refurbishment programme.
- Refurbishment of Library accommodation in the Norman Shaw North building.
- Refurbishment of Lower Waiting Hall toilets.

## Preserving Parliamentary records

The advent of digitisation has enabled Parliament to improve the storage of, and access to, its historic records by users, although it is also important to ensure that they, and other digital information, are accessible, even if various hardware and software become obsolete over time. 2009/10 was the second year of implementing the Digital Preservation Strategy. A pilot project to archive the Parliamentary web estate was completed in Summer 2009, with 8.8 million web pages archived. A contract to undertake web archiving as a business-as-usual activity was established. Nearly 700 gigabytes (GB) of at-risk digital information have been temporarily secured through the Archives' Digital Preservation Project, pending the implementation of a permanent digital repository.

## Managing works of art


The Curator's Office, advised by the Speaker's Advisory Committee on Works of Art, carries out a wide range of duties related to the Parliamentary Art Collection.

A key event in the year was the launch of the Works of Art website, after many years of hard work. This draws together photographic images of many of the works of art, grouped by theme or subject, and providing narrative and news stories.

The main conservation project was the statue of Richard I in Old Palace Yard over the summer. Work was photographed throughout the project, providing an insider's look at the conservation work that goes on behind the scenes at Westminster.

The letting of a contract to provide a specialist salvage and incident course for staff of both Houses will be extremely helpful in training staff and developing procedures to deal with the types of incident that could otherwise cause considerable damage to items in the collection.

In March 2009 the British photographer Simon Roberts was commissioned by the Speaker's Advisory Committee on Works of Art to document the campaign activity in the run up to the 2010 General Election. His photographs will join the Parliamentary Art Collection. As part of the project Simon is also giving the public the chance to get involved, by submitting photographs relating to political activity in their local area leading up to and during the election.



Good progress was made towards fire safety measures in the Chambers of both Houses during the 2009 Summer Recess which also saw the completion of the annual Summer Works programme.

The short term Mechanical and Electrical Modernisation Project was completed and progress made on developing the medium and long term phases of the programme.

## SUPPORTING TASK 1 HUMAN RESOURCES

To provide a skilled and motivated workforce; giving recognition and reward for achievement and ensuring that all staff realise their full potential regardless of level or background; and promoting diversity



- 1,839 full-time equivalent Commons Service staff (average)
- 99 recruitment exercises
- 53% of staff female

### Developing people skills and managing careers

The Corporate Learning team in the Department of Resources has worked closely with departmental learning & development (L&D) Advisers during 2009/10 to offer a more integrated and wider ranging training prospectus for House staff. Training which had previously been organised departmentally such as interpersonal skills, minute taking and presentation skills are now run centrally, allowing departmental L&D Advisers to focus on facilitating workshops, giving career advice and running short training sessions. This approach will allow future training to be designed and run internally with Corporate Learning licensed to train in-house trainers to nationally recognised standards.

Learning and development work has been done further improve the capability of managers and staff for their current and future roles:

- “Leading for Parliament” is a new development programme for senior staff, planned to be launched early in 2011. The aims of the programme are to develop leadership skills and a shared culture of working in parliament and help equip leaders to think strategically, work

innovatively and collaboratively and be prepared to challenge conventional wisdom.

- “Managing for Excellence” is a programme giving new managers core management skills - is now on its 12th programme with the final two planned for 2010/11. Over 150 managers will have completed the programme and around 80 of those will have achieved their Introductory Certificate in Management Level 4.
- A new programme for more experienced managers has been designed and will be launched before the 2010 summer recess. This will give managers more advanced skills and a Diploma in Management and Leadership at Level 5.

The “Skills for Life” initiative was introduced in January, encouraging staff to be assessed in adult literacy and numeracy and to undertake National Vocational Qualifications in areas such as customer service and business administration. Over 50 staff across the House are currently participating.

Almost 200 courses and workshops took place in 2009/10 with 1,900 places being taken up. In addition to formal training, Corporate Learning



are continuing to expand opportunities for different types of learning with the continuation of the mentoring scheme and the development of coaches. A bicameral e-learning strategy is about to be introduced which will allow e-learning to be more readily accessible.

### Recognising and rewarding achievements

The House has a three year pay agreements with the unions for the period April 2008 until March 2011. Part of the agreement for pay bands A-E pay includes a commitment to review the system of allowances and additional payments paid to staff who are required to work extended and unsocial hours. During this year a project delivered the key information required for this review.

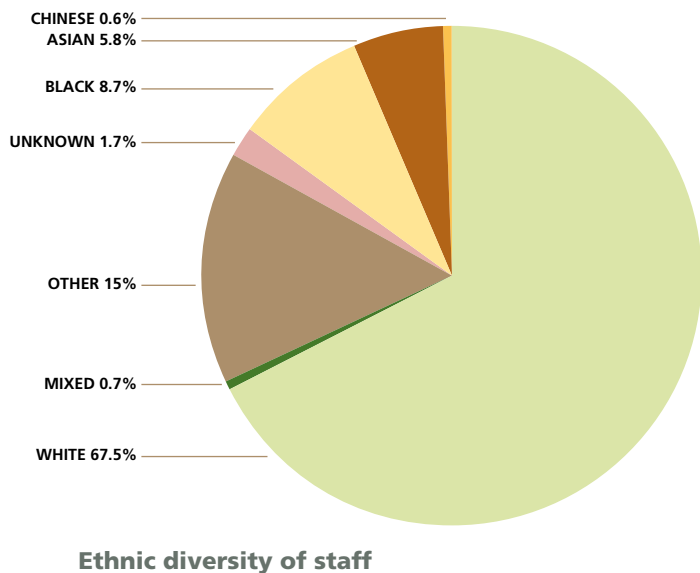
A new Performance Award Scheme for staff in bands A-E was implemented from April 2009. The scheme was negotiated as part of the three-year pay agreement and was designed to encourage excellent performance and behaviours, the delivery of objectives and to give prompt and tangible recognition for staff. This did not proved as successful as had been anticipated, and in early 2010/11 it was discontinued.

A staff recognition scheme recognises the contribution, effort and loyalty of staff that have long service and/or retire or leave after long service. In 2009/10 fifteen staff received awards from the Clerk of the House recognising 30 years' service with a further seven receiving awards marking 40 years' service.

### Supporting diversity

The House of Commons Service Equality Scheme was launched in January 2010. The event was attended by 150 people made up of staff of both Houses, Members, visitors and the equality teams from the other UK legislative bodies. A keynote speech was delivered by Mr Speaker in which he emphasised the message of fairness for everyone and valuing everyone who works in Parliament.

The House Equality Scheme has an extensive action plan and the Diversity team meet with Action Owners to offer support and monitor progress. Considerable work has already been done on areas such as providing the House with a pool of British Sign Language interpreters, information and support for disabled Members and staff and collating diversity statistics in recruitment





campaigns. An update of the Action Plan will be prepared for the Commission and the Management Board in July 2010.

The corporate work experience scheme was re-launched in Spring 2010 with the aim of ensuring all enquiries for work experience are logged and distribution of places done in a fair and open way.

The “Valuing Others” policy was updated in the Staff Handbook to support the House in working towards an environment free from harassment and bullying for everyone by including all people working on the parliamentary estate in the policy.

Last year, the Administration Committee asked the Diversity team to speak to Members about child care facilities within the House. This research, and other consultation with child care experts, was presented to the Commission in late 2009. The Commission decided to establish an on-site nursery for the children of Members, Members’ staff and House staff. The contract to run the nursery was let to the London Early Years Foundation, and it is expected that a nursery for 40 children aged between six months and five years will open in September 2010.

## Improving employee relations

The management of the House Service continued to seek constructive engagement with the trade unions and regular departmental meetings have complemented the formal Whitley Committee meetings. A number of changes were made to its constitution as a result of the implementation of the Tebbit report (for example to reflect the restructuring of House departments and the assimilation of the Craft Consortium into band A-E pay).

Regular consultations have taken place on policy matters including a revision to the Staff Handbook in December 2009.

The Internal Communications team in the Office of the Chief Executive have continued to publish *Commons Digest* (an email bulletin directed at managers) and *Parliamentary News* (a staff newsletter for all staff of both Houses) throughout 2009/10. They have also worked with the Web Centre to improve the clarity of messages to staff, and organised a series of conferences for senior and middle managers.

A staff survey was conducted in June 2009 and 57% of staff responded to it. There are many areas where the House of Commons and PICT scored very highly as an employer, indicating the degree of commitment from staff:

- Employees understand what is expected of them in their work (92%).
- Willing to work beyond what is required in order to help the House / PICT be successful (90%).
- Supporting the overall aims and objectives of the organisation (85%).

Although the House of Commons / PICT still out-performs both the public and private sectors in terms of pride in working for the organisation, the scores have dropped since 2008. This may reflect, at least in part, the fact that the 2009 survey was conducted while the House was receiving significant adverse publicity about Members' expenses.

In response to the survey an action plan was drawn up to target particular areas where the House and PICT fall short, and the 2010 survey will assess progress in addressing these issues.


In February 2010 the Commission approved a new statement outlining "what Members can expect from the House Service and what is expected in return". This was published in the new edition of the Members' Handbook in May 2010.

## Investors in People

The House of Commons and PICT were reassessed for the Investors in People (IiP) standard in Autumn 2009. The Managing Assessor's judgement was that the organisation continues to meet the requirements of the Investors in People standard. The organisation also meets 25 additional evidence requirements against more advanced measures from the Investors in People framework; this is just one short of the total required for 'Bronze' Investors in People status. Additionally, the House of Commons won the annual internal review team award from London IiP-UK.







## SUPPORTING TASK 2 ACCOMMODATION, CATERING AND SECURITY

To provide a healthy, safe and secure physical environment in which the business of the House can be effectively conducted; this includes accommodation, office services, catering and security

- 1,669,000 catering covers
- 1,836 appointments with occupational health nurses
- 282 staff referrals to a physician

### Meeting accommodation needs

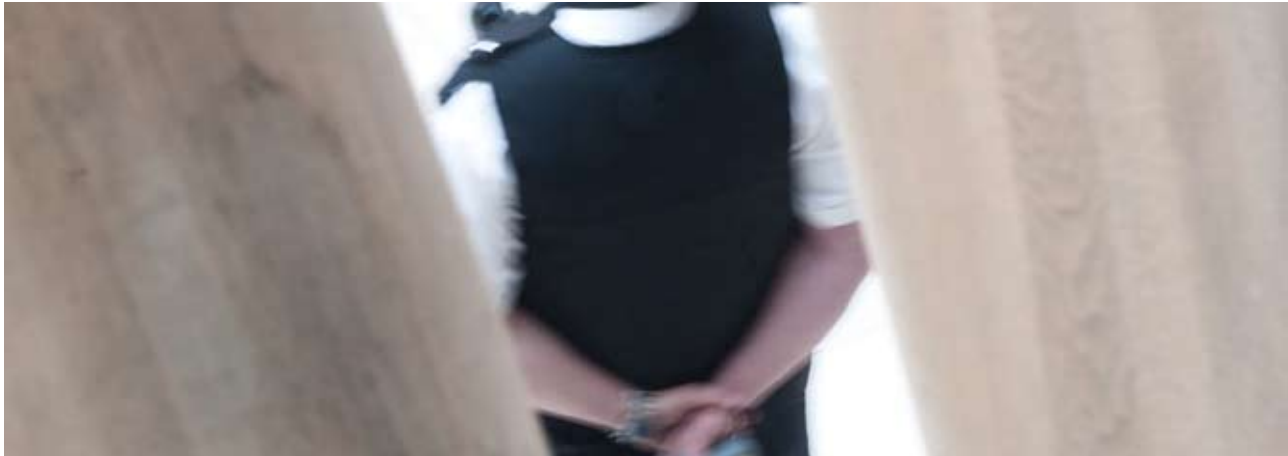
The Accommodation and Logistics Services Directorate provides Members, their staff and staff of the House with high quality accommodation services, such as cleaning and mail services, to enable them to carry out their parliamentary roles effectively (see also core task 2, [\[page reference\]](#)).

Cleaning performance by both In-house and contract cleaners varied but the target of 86% was achieved every month and the overall score for the year was 88.1%.

The most significant work during the year 2009/10 was the preparation for the delivery of Members' accommodation in the period surrounding the General Election. Following the 2005 General Election the House Service agreed to accommodate new Members more speedily in the future. To achieve this requires more resources and new working procedures. Staff from the Directorate led the work to plan and execute this at the 2010 Election. This had a very significant impact on managers' ability to deal effectively with other objectives in the latter part of the year.

During 2009/10, in response to requests from Departments for assistance in managing their accommodation requirements the Directorate recruited a manager, who joined at the start of the year, to undertake this task. She will play a key role in developing and implementing a revised accommodation strategy which meets Parliament's requirements in a more austere financial climate.

The Directorate assumed responsibility for delivering the Off Site Consolidation Centre (OSCC) in February 2010. A new post of Parliamentary Logistics Manager was established to manage this project which is expected to come into effect early in 2011. The OSCC will screen goods and consolidate them before they are delivered to the Parliamentary Estate. The Logistics Manager will also work with Departments of both Houses to improve their logistics practices.



### Catering to the needs of the House

Catering and Retail Services provide up to 1.6 million meals every year to support its customers. It operates a range of facilities from snack bars to fine dining restaurants, bar services and private function rooms; souvenirs and gifts are available to help fulfil visitors’ and Members’ experiences.

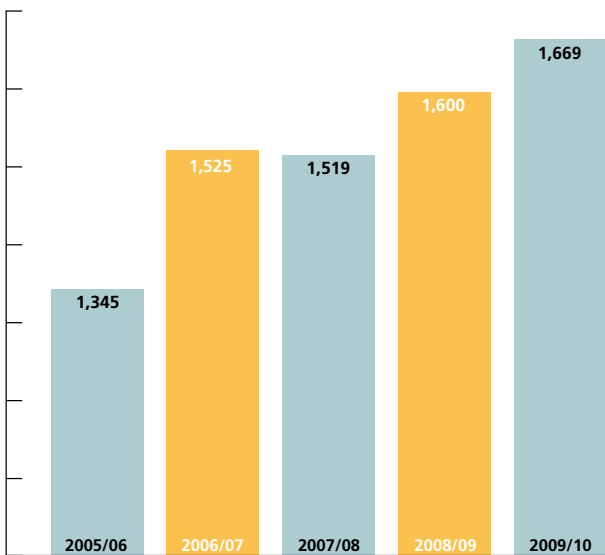
Funding is from two sources: in 2009/10 64.5% was from customers and 35.5% from the Administration Estimate. This year Catering and Retail Services achieved the lowest net cost of operations since 2002/03, with the subsidy figure of 35.5% well below the target of 41%. The House of Commons Commission has recently agreed that the subsidy should be reduced significantly more in 2010/11.

### Providing security and reassurance

Given the status of the Palace and its inhabitants, a high level of security is required around the clock. The Serjeant at Arms Directorate is responsible for the House’s own security staff, including the doorkeepers, who work closely with members of the Metropolitan Police Service, as well as fire officers and security officers, who are provided under contract, while the Pass Office is responsible for issuing passes.

The Serjeant at Arms Directorate led a thorough review and negotiations with the Metropolitan Police Authority for the new contract. The results will lead to higher standards of performance, reduced cost over the contract’s life and robust monitoring of performance.

Parliament’s mail security screening service, managed by the Serjeant at Arms Directorate, has attracted a further five Government Departments to share the facility. This brings the total number of participants to eleven and Parliament receives a rebate of around £75,000 per year due to economies of scale.



**Number of catering covers**  
(000's)



## Preventing accidents on the Estate

The Safety, Health and Wellbeing Service (SHWS) provides assistance to the House of Commons (and House of Lords), including a professional, independent and confidential advisory service on all aspects of occupational health and safety to directly employed staff.

The SHWS's role includes ensuring that:

- the House complies with occupational health and safety legislation and is in the forefront of recognised good practice;
- good quality information is provided to support operations and management decision making across both Houses;
- occupational health, safety and welfare policy and practice meets the needs of both Houses.

There were 99 accidents causing injury reported last year; a significant reduction compared to 2008/09. Our incident rate for RIDDOR reportable<sup>1</sup> accidents is 444 per 100,000 employees, compared to a national rate of 870 per 100,000 workers<sup>2</sup>.



<sup>1</sup> RIDDOR: Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 1995

<sup>2</sup> Self-reported work-related illness and workplace injuries in 2008/09: Results from the Labour Force Survey [www.hse.gov.uk/statistics/lfs/0809/hubresults.htm](http://www.hse.gov.uk/statistics/lfs/0809/hubresults.htm).

## SUPPORTING TASK 3 PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT

To plan and manage all of the House's resources to a high standard, achieving value for money and matching current public service standards including in the areas of risk and change management and environmental protection

- 26 internal audits
- 57.3% waste recycled

### Taking a strategic approach

The Corporate Business Plan 2010/11 was drafted during 2009/10 and published in time for the start of the new financial year. The plan clearly linked business plans with financial plans, and set out detailed information on key projects.

The Corporate Balanced Scorecard has become an established part of performance reporting for the Management Board. The process behind the Scorecard – and its content – have developed during 2009/10. An Internal Audit review of the Balanced Scorecard was conducted towards the end of the year, with the report completed in early 2010/11.

Alex Jablonowski, the external member of the Management Board, was commissioned by the Management Board to undertake a review of the impact of the Tebbit Review in January 2010. His overall assessment was positive, although he identified a number of areas in which there was unfinished work or where a different approach was required. These will form the basis of action for the Management Board in 2010/11.

Work started towards the end of 2009/10 on developing a new five-year strategy for the House of Commons. This was completed and published in June 2010.

### General election planning

General Election Planning Group was established to oversee the strategic direction of the provision of House services around the time of a General Election, with regard to relevant and timely provision of information and services both in advance of polling day (in particular retiring Members) and in the period after (in particular to new Members, and also defeated Members).

Co-ordinated by the Office of the Chief Executive, the planning covered dissolution arrangements; the New Members' Reception Area; services for defeated Members; post-election training for Members; accommodation and ICT provision.

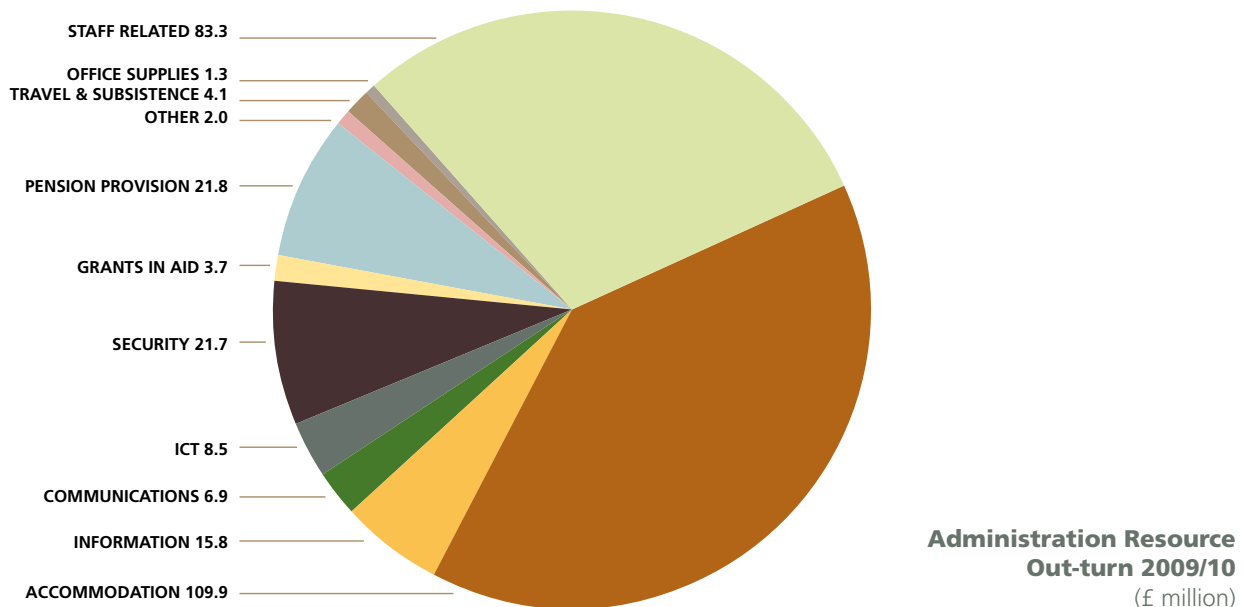
## Financial management

The 2009/10 Administration Resource Estimate was set at the same level as 2008/09, requiring the House Service to absorb the cost of new initiatives as well as general inflation and pay pressures.

The Management Board proposed to make further savings of 9% against the 2009/10 budget by 2012/13 (i.e. £231 million reducing to £210 million). The House of Commons Commission agreed to this proposal in Autumn 2009, and the House Service established a Savings Programme to deliver these cost reductions.

There were no significant changes to the financial systems during 2009/10. A review of financial controls was undertaken by Internal Audit as part of their annual assurance programme of work. No fundamental changes to the existing internal controls were considered necessary, although the stricter enforcement of some procedures was recommended. These recommendations have been acted on and control systems strengthened. The 2009/10 Administration Estimate Resource Accounts were prepared on the basis of International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS) for the first time and laid with an unqualified audit opinion in July 2010.

The Resource Framework was reviewed and updated during the year but has not yet been fully communicated. Guidance on business case preparation was re-launched in July 2009. Revised guidance on governance, financial planning and budget monitoring will be re-launched in 2010/11 supported by further financial training for staff. The governance guidance includes templates for new delegation letters which will be adopted for staff with financial responsibilities.





## Achieving value for money

The Management Board approved new procurement policies during the year. In August 2009 a new Transactional Team was established within the Commercial Services Directorate in the Department of Resources and governance arrangements were updated as part of the remodelling programme.

An e-tendering tool was launched in October 2009. This has received positive feedback from those involved in procurement activities, and by the end of the year there were over 100 active tenders using this approach.

New procedures were put in place to ensure that the House would be able to meet its obligations under the EU Remedies Directive.

## An effective audit function

The House's Internal Audit team, working with their strategic partners (PricewaterhouseCoopers until October 2009; Deloitte since then), undertook 26 audits in 2009/10, including increased joint working and reliance on each others work with the internal audit team in the House of Lords in areas of joint interest (primarily Parliamentary Estates and PICT). These audit reports were submitted to the Administration Estimate Audit Committee (AEAC), whose report can be found on [\[page XX\]](#). The timeliness of the completion of some work was affected during the year by the involvement of the Internal Audit team in the Legg Review, but in most cases the team caught up within the year.

Positive feedback indicates that Internal Audit are adding value, particularly through specific value-for-money (VFM) studies, that have included learning and development and newspapers this year, as well as recommendations for improvement in other operational areas. In client satisfaction surveys following audits, the team achieved a satisfaction rating of 82%. Reliance is placed by external audit (National Audit Office) on the financial controls work on the Administration Estimate undertaken by Internal Audit.

## Monitoring and mitigating risks

The Risk Management team in the Office of the Chief Executive continued its work to develop risk management within the House. A corporate risk management strategy and operational framework has been agreed by the Management Board which follows best practice as adopted elsewhere in the public sector. In response to an internal audit review, a project was established to direct this work and link both corporate and departmental systems of risk management to more integrated management models over time.

The corporate risks are reviewed each month by the corporate risk owners (Directors General) and a monthly update is provided to the Management Board within the Balanced Scorecard. Part of the focus this year has also been to "challenge" risk owners on how effectively risks are being managed and ensure that risk owners have identified appropriate management action plans (if necessary)

<sup>1</sup> Environmental monitoring statistics relate to Parliament as a whole, not specifically to the House of Commons



to reduce the level of risk. At departmental level, the risk identification process is increasingly integrated with the departmental business planning process.

The Risk Management team have had regular meetings with HM Treasury to ensure the House risk management policy remains in line with public sector “best practice”. The team also attended the Government Risk Improvement Manager network meetings.

## A greener House

A new environmental strategy was agreed by the House of Commons Commission in March 2010. This included targets for the reduction of gas and electricity consumed; a reduction in waste and improvements in recycling.

In 2009/10 Parliament<sup>1</sup> reduced its carbon footprint for the first time. Efforts to improve energy efficiency and wide environmental performance, including lighting replacement, adjustments to the heating and cooling systems and provision of greater recycling facilities, have paid off.

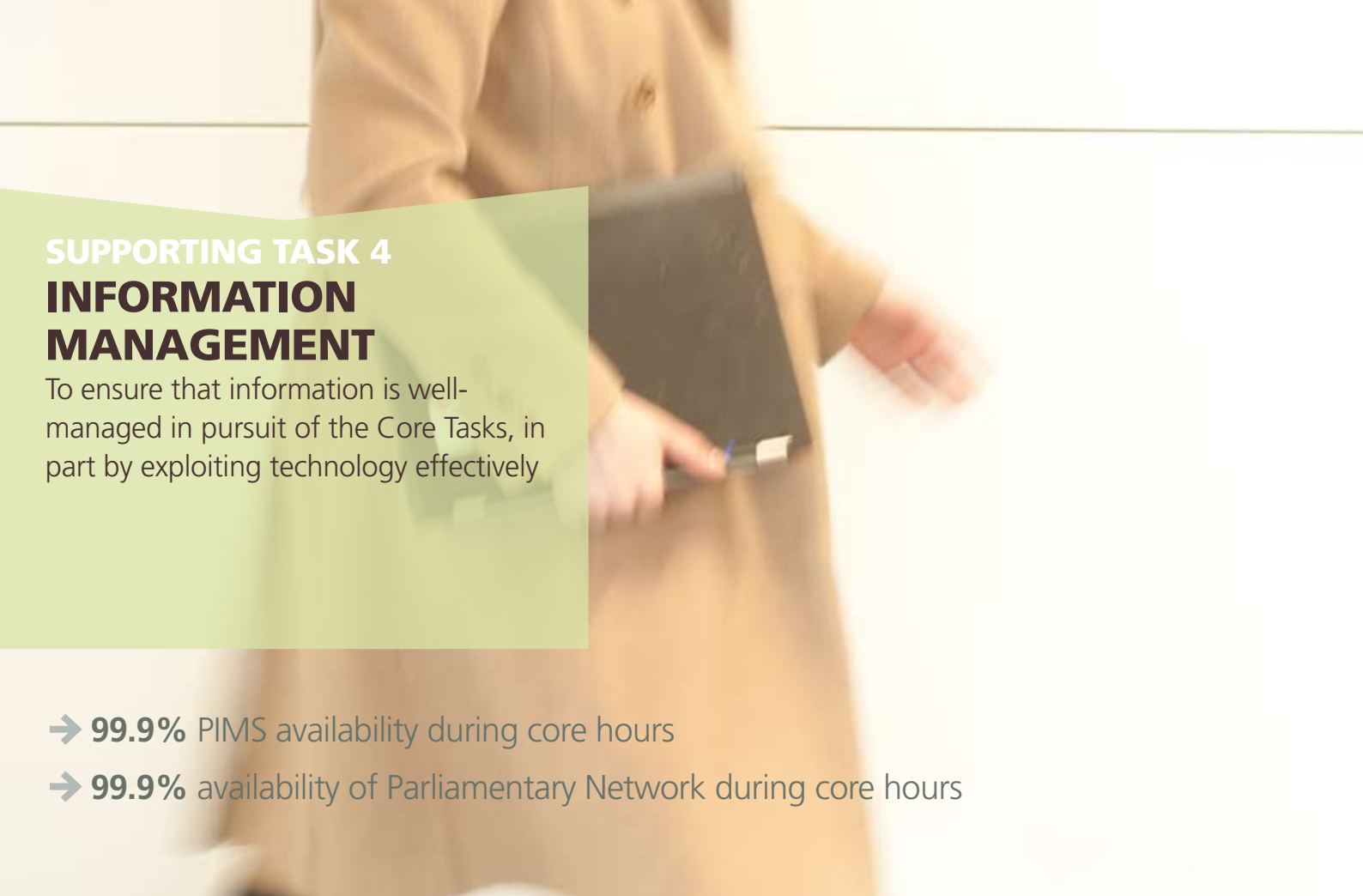
Compared to 2008/09:

- carbon dioxide emissions have been reduced by 3%;
- water consumption has been reduced by 10%;
- the amount of waste generated has fallen by 13%;
- 56% of waste is now recycled.

## Business resilience

A major Parliament-wide incident management rehearsal was completed in June 2009, resulting in the implementation of an incident management framework across both Houses in July 2009. Regular duty rosters are in place at different management levels for incident command and control.

Departments have written and validated business continuity plans. Communications cascades, in preparation for a swine flu pandemic, were also reviewed and tested.



## SUPPORTING TASK 4 INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

To ensure that information is well-managed in pursuit of the Core Tasks, in part by exploiting technology effectively

- 99.9% PIMS availability during core hours
- 99.9% availability of Parliamentary Network during core hours

### Investing in ICT services for the future

The information and communication technology (ICT) needs of the House of Commons (and across Parliament) are provided by PICT. In addition to the services delivered to Members (see core task 2, [\[page reference\]](#)), PICT also provided services to House staff such as the provision of desktop and laptop computers, and development of business services.

During 2009/10 there were a number of developments to ensure that the network and infrastructure were kept up-to-date, including:

- roll-out of the new Windows Vista operating system and associated new collaboration tools to over 2,500 computers for staff of both Houses;
- procurement of a remote data centre to provide offsite resilience for core ICT services;
- replacement of network switches, which will allow for significant network capacity to be added in the future.

In addition to the provision of core ICT services, PICT has collaborated on a number of business-led projects, including:

- the Procedural Data Programme – a vehicle for renewing the systems and tools which capture, manage and prepare for publication information about the core legislative and scrutiny work of both Houses and their committees;
- implementation of a project management tool for the Parliamentary Estates Directorate;
- new enquiry management tools for both the Commons and Lords libraries.



## Managing information needs

The Library's Information Management Directorate is responsible for managing many of the key information requirements, including Library services, such as books and online resources, and the Parliamentary Information Management Services (PIMS).

During 2009/10, 128,589 items were added to PIMS, while work with PICT to improve the stability of the system ensured that its availability was 99.9%, exceeding the target.

Good progress has been made in the first year of the Core Parliamentary Information Management Framework Programme (CPIMF), which will decommission PIMS in 2011/12.

2009/10 saw the formation of the Group on Information Management (GIM), a bicameral group to coordinate Parliament's strategy for managing information. The group aims to provide a challenge across the parliamentary administration to use information in ways that improve efficiency and effectiveness and reduce risk.

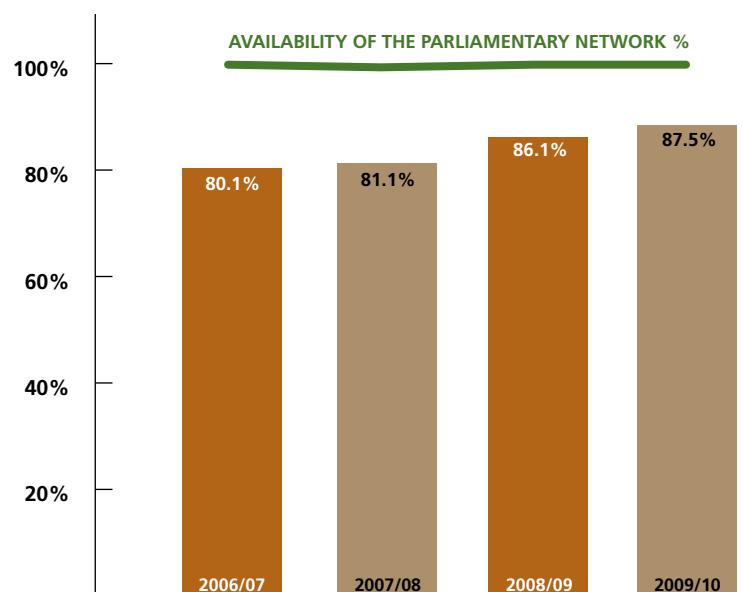
SPIRE (Supporting Parliamentary Information and Records) is a programme working across both Houses to provide better access to our electronic information. It will ensure that current and future staff can create, find, store and share their electronic documents and records with confidence. It will also ensure that all of Parliament's electronic documents and records are secure, reliable, authentic and legally admissible.

The business case for the programme was approved in December 2009. On approval of the business case the procurement process began for an

electronic document and records management system and recruitment has taken place for staff to manage the new projects.

## Handling and storing data appropriately

During the year the House of Commons Management Board agreed the introduction of a Framework of Mandatory Information Security Requirements including the implementation of a Protective Marking Scheme (PMS). As a result updated Data Protection and Information Security Policies have been published, awareness raising training has been delivered and new assurance systems established.



PICT helpdesk cases resolved within target



## SUPPORTING TASK 5 WORKING WITH OTHERS

To maintain a good working relationship with the House of Lords, particularly in the provision of shared services; and to share information and best practice with other parliaments and assemblies, and to co-operate with other organisation that can assist the House Service in its work

→ 115 inward visits through the Overseas Office

### Working together with the House of Lords

While the Commons Service is distinct from the Lords Service, there are close relations between the two. Indeed, some services are shared between the two Houses, with the most obvious example being PICT, which is a joint department of both Houses. In many other areas though, such as security, estates, archives and records, broadcasting, outreach, education, and visitor services and tours, services are provided jointly, with most shared services based in the Commons Service.

In addition to formally shared services, there have been some notable examples of good working relations between the two services. At the highest level, the Clerk of the House continued to hold regular meetings with his counterpart from the Lords Services, the Clerk of Parliaments.

There are two sub-committees of the Management Boards of the House of Commons and the House of Lords which provide an overview of services provided jointly to both Houses. The Parliamentary Estate Board's (PEB) remit includes recommending

and keeping under review, the Estates Strategy; recommending the convening (and dissolution) of Project Boards; and providing assurance to the Management Boards that projects are progressing in accordance with their plans.

The PICT Advisory Board (PICTAB) supports the Director of Parliamentary ICT in preparing proposals for agreement by the two Management Boards and gives advice on the strategic management of PICT. It also acts as a forum in which representatives of senior management in the two Houses assist in formulating a bicameral ICT strategy for approval by the two Management Boards.

## Working with other parliaments, assemblies and organisations

The Houses of Parliament sent delegations to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE), the European, Security and Defence Assembly (ESDA/ WEU), the Parliamentary Assembly of the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE PA) and the NATO Parliamentary Assembly (NATO PA). The European Section of the Overseas Office in the House of Commons assisted the 72 delegation members who attended 8 plenary sessions and nearly 241 committee meetings during the year.

The UK delegation continued its high levels of activity at PACE and the AWEU. UK Members chaired the ESDA's Defence Committee and two PACE Committees and often acted as rapporteurs on important issues. Members of the UK delegation to the NATO PA chaired the Economics and Security Committee and the Science and Technology Committee, as well as providing Vice Chairs to five committees and sub-committees and rapporteurs to two committees. The Section also made the arrangements for visits to the UK by committees of the Assemblies: in 2009/10 it facilitated visits by the PACE's Committees on Economic Affairs, the Environment and Social, Health and Family Affairs.

The European Section – assisted by members of many other offices in both Houses – made the administrative arrangements for the NATO PA Annual Session, hosted by the United Kingdom in Edinburgh in July 2009, which was attended by approximately 750 delegates from over 50 countries.

The Department of Information Services, with the support of the House of Lords Library, hosted an international seminar on Parliamentary Research Services in September 2009 attended by about 60 participants from 42 parliamentary chambers and three European institutions.

The Commonwealth Serjeants at Arms Conference – the fourth hosted by the House of Commons – was held in Portcullis House in July 2009, led by the Serjeant at Arms and focusing on security challenges. 42 delegates participated, with presentations from House of Commons managers as well as experts and practitioners in specialist fields.



# Annexes

## ANNEX 1 Data tables

### CORE TASK 1:

**To provide the advice and services that enable the House and its committees to conduct their business effectively**

<b>Sittings of the House</b>	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09
Number of sitting days	151	137	146	153	149
Average length of sitting days	7hr 57min	8hr 13min	7hr 39min	7hr 51min	7hr 37min
Westminster Hall sitting days	100	86	93	99	97
Average length of Westminster Hall sitting days	4hr 4min	4hr 6min	3hr 53min	3hr 57min	3hr 54min
<b>Hansard</b>					
Total columns of debate reported (Chamber and Westminster Hall)	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	24,508
Average columns published per sitting day	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	164
Debate report columns per significant error (target = 13)	14	14	16	21	21
Average daily print run	1,836	1,987	1,923	1,676	1,550
<b>Daily vote bundle</b>					
Average number of pages per sitting day	268	297	372	347	353
<b>Printing and publishing</b>					
Total expenditure (£m) (a) cash figure (b) resource figure	11.5(a)	9.2(a)	12.6(b)	12.7(b) <sup>†</sup>	12.5(b)
<b>Questions, motions and answers</b>					
Average number of questions dealt with by the Table Office per sitting day	456	596	605	591	619
Number of Members who have used e-tabling facility	153	300	334	268	255
Percentage of questions e-tabled	20.9%	29.6%	36.0%	38.4%	46.0%
Total number of written answers published	49,562	61,477	63,451	63,641	73,601
EDMs: average number tabled per week	60	76	76	74	85
EDMs: average number of signatures per week	3,090	4,222	4,345	3,707	3,884
<b>Legislation</b>					
Government bills	44	49	38	32	25
Private Members' bills	95	87	86	101	98
Private bills	6	5	5	12	1
General Committee meetings	421	371	492	340	404
Total number of new amendments, new clauses and new schedules tabled	7,668	5,438	7,737	6,835	6,058
Average per sitting day	48.8	39.7	53.2	44.7	41.2
<b>Hansard (Public bill and general committees)</b>					
Total number of pages of debates published	7,236	6,059	7,208	6,816	6,754
Columns per significant error (target=13)	17	37	32	25	31
<b>Statutory instruments</b>					
Considered by Joint or Select Committee on Statutory Instruments	1,467	1,662	1,373	1,518	1,434
Special attention of House drawn to	74	100	85	75	56
<b>Regulatory reform</b>					
Draft Legislative Reform Orders reported on	18	4	8	7	9

<sup>†</sup> figure revised

<b>European Scrutiny Committee</b>					
EU Documents scrutinised	898	883	1,045	1,044	941
Reported as legally or politically important	431	437	484	472	443
Debates in European Standing Committee	38	32	42	34	32
Debates on the floor of the House	2	1	6	3	5
<b>Joint Committee on Human Rights</b>					
Bills considered	88	99	46	21	17
Special attention of the House drawn to	40	43	19	11	10
<b>Select Committees</b>					
	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09
Meetings	1,224	823	1,241	1,105 <sup>†</sup>	1,123
Reports (departmental committees only)	286	147	215	250 <sup>†</sup>	229
<b>Information Services</b>					
	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09
<b>Research papers</b>					
Research papers on major bills published before second reading	97%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Number of research papers published	94	82	80	92 <sup>†</sup>	91
Research papers downloaded (internet and intranet) (a) Total excludes figures for Nov and Dec 2005 which are unavailable	887,000	1,051,000 (a)	1,520,000	1,492,484	1,485,510

## CORE TASK 2:

**To provide the advice and services that enable individual Members (and their staff) to perform their parliamentary duties effectively**

<b>Information Services</b>	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09
<b>Fully-logged enquiries</b>					
With deadline	6,941 <sup>†</sup>	7,184 <sup>†</sup>	7,448 <sup>†</sup>	6,853 <sup>†</sup>	8,439
answered by deadline (target: 97%)	95.1% <sup>†</sup>	95.3% <sup>†</sup>	96.8% <sup>†</sup>	97.3% <sup>†</sup>	97.6%
Without deadline	4,946 <sup>†</sup>	7,001 <sup>†</sup>	7,086 <sup>†</sup>	7,141 <sup>†</sup>	8,100
answered within two weeks (target: 90%)	73.6% <sup>†</sup>	97.3% <sup>†</sup>	97.2% <sup>†</sup>	98.0% <sup>†</sup>	98.4%
"Quick log" inquiries	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	11,126
<b>Books and video loans</b>					
Total	3,277	3,077	3,446	3,416	3,542
From stock	77%	81%	82%	80%	80%
Tapes and transcripts acquired	260	201	191	673	189
Items supplied by requested date	89%	90%	94%	84%	91%
Standard notes on intranet at year end	2,173	2,720	2,813	3,094 <sup>†</sup>	3,332
Standard notes downloaded (intranet and internet) (a) Intranet and PIMS only	121,000	n/a	113,000	227,696	211,280(a)
Factsheets downloaded (intranet and internet) (a) Total excludes figure for Dec 2005, which are unavailable (b) Internet only	280,000	310,000	386,000 (a)	330,636	309,740(b)

**POLIS/PIMS**

Items added	136,881	199,702	137,789	160,829	188,851
availability during scheduled hours	99.8%	96.5%	98.5%	98.2%	99.7%

**Members' staff**

	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09
Number of Members' staff on payroll at end of financial year	2,584	2,577	2,493	2,694	2,875

**CORE TASK 3:****promoting public knowledge and understanding of the work and role of Parliament through the provision of information and access****Information Office**

	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09
Telephone enquiries	53,245	46,181	42,385	40,821	35,766
email and written enquiries	4,822	5,953	4,149	4,196	4,818
Total enquiries	58,067	52,134	46,534	45,017	41,083
Calls answered within 20 seconds	88%	88%	91%	85%	88%

**Visitor numbers**

	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09
Visitors to Chamber galleries	126,781	100,254	116,714	123,768	117,482
Percentage entering via public queue	88.2%	76%	54%	77%	
Members' tours visitors	113,815 <sup>†</sup>	108,089	129,940	131,754	129,865
Summer Opening	93,314	79,170	87,294	89,057	90,835

**Education Service**

	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09
Publications sent out	96,128	78,617	83,492 <sup>†</sup>	96,709	78,957

**Parliamentary Broadcasting**

	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09
Archived videotape recordings of proceedings	2,078	1,253	1,283	1,407	1,458
Completed orders for recordings	780	814	800	837	791

**Website**

	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09
Requests (million)	29.4	32.5	33.5	49.1	51.0

## SUPPORTING TASKS

<b>Internal Communications</b>	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09
Intranet 'requests' (million) (a) estimate (b) requests from some intranet sites are not included	5.1	5.4	n/a	8.8(a)	7.9(b)

<b>Staff payroll</b>	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09
Full-time equivalent House and PICT staff (average over year)	1,554	1,553	1,606	1,696	1,741
Data changes made to staff payroll	29,200	29,126	39,714	51,490	51,308

<b>Recruitment</b>	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09
Internal recruitment exercises	67	138	115	35	108
Internal/external or external only recruitment exercises	46	180	133	96	92
Total	113	318	248	131	200

<b>Occupational health, safety and welfare</b>	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09
Treatments provided by nursing sister	2,213	1,938	2,223	1,933	1,684
Medical screenings (Members)	101	83	130	106	112
Staff referrals to physician	452	369	356	244	274
Referrals to physiotherapy	288	334	292	221	150
Sickness absence referral	470	256	269	225	203
Accidents causing injury	125	151	178	111	142

<b>Catering</b>	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09
Total covers (thousands)	1,454	1,345	1,525	1,519	1,600

<b>Environmental performance</b>	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09
Energy use per square metre (kWh) (whole parliamentary estate)	320	361.2 <sup>†</sup>	340.2 <sup>†</sup>	346 <sup>†</sup>	362.5
Waste recovered (%)	100	100	100	100	100
Waste recycled (%)	29.0	35.9	40.2	45.7	49.9

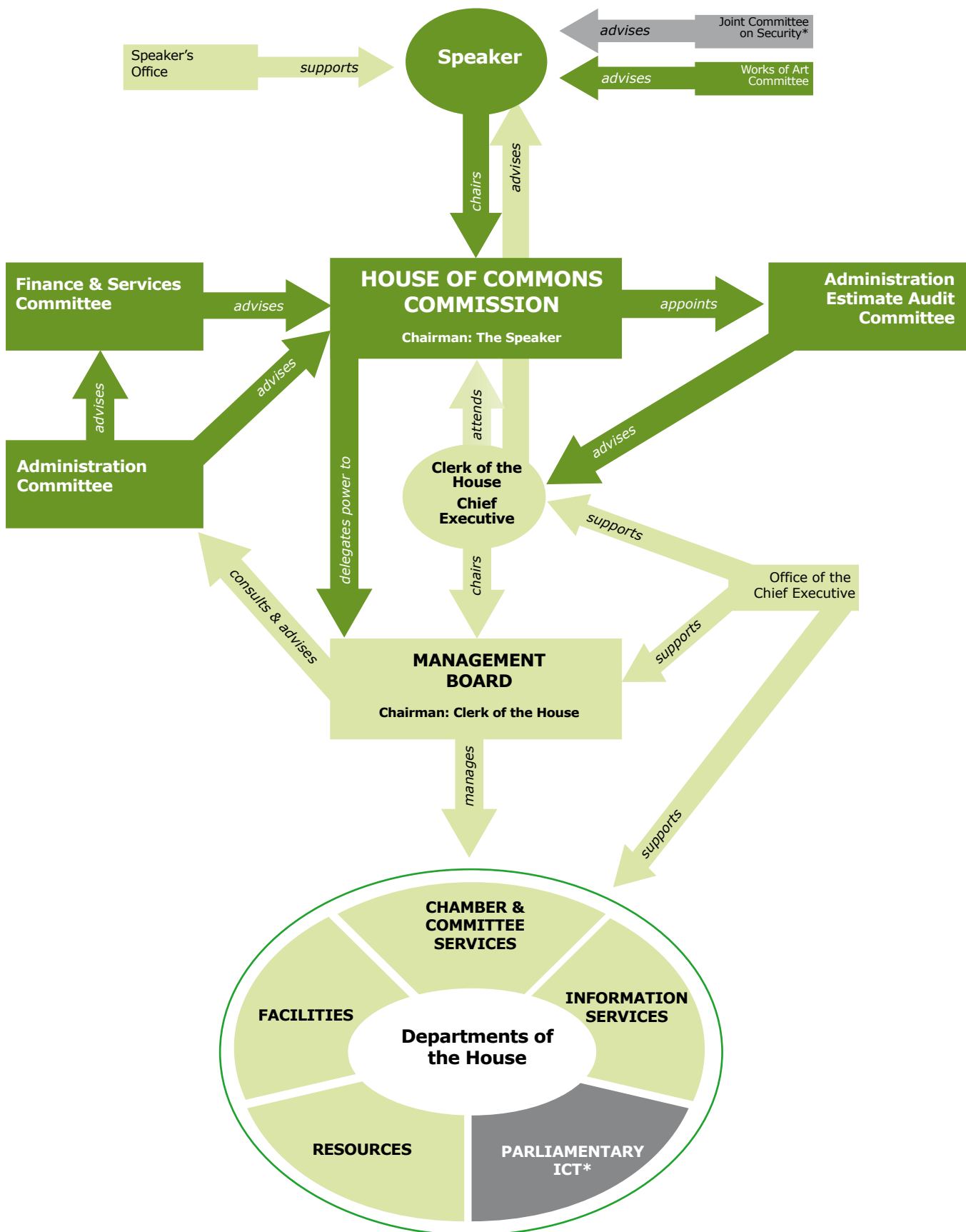
  

<b>Parliamentary Network</b>	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09
Infrastructure availability (working hours) for 2008/09 figure is for availability at all times	99.3%	99.9%	99.9%	99.8%	98.9%
Support cases resolved within target More rigorous target introduced in 2006/07 2008/09 figure adjusted for delays caused by difficulty contacting the customer	97.6%	96.3%	80.1%	81.1%	86.1%

<sup>†</sup> figure revised



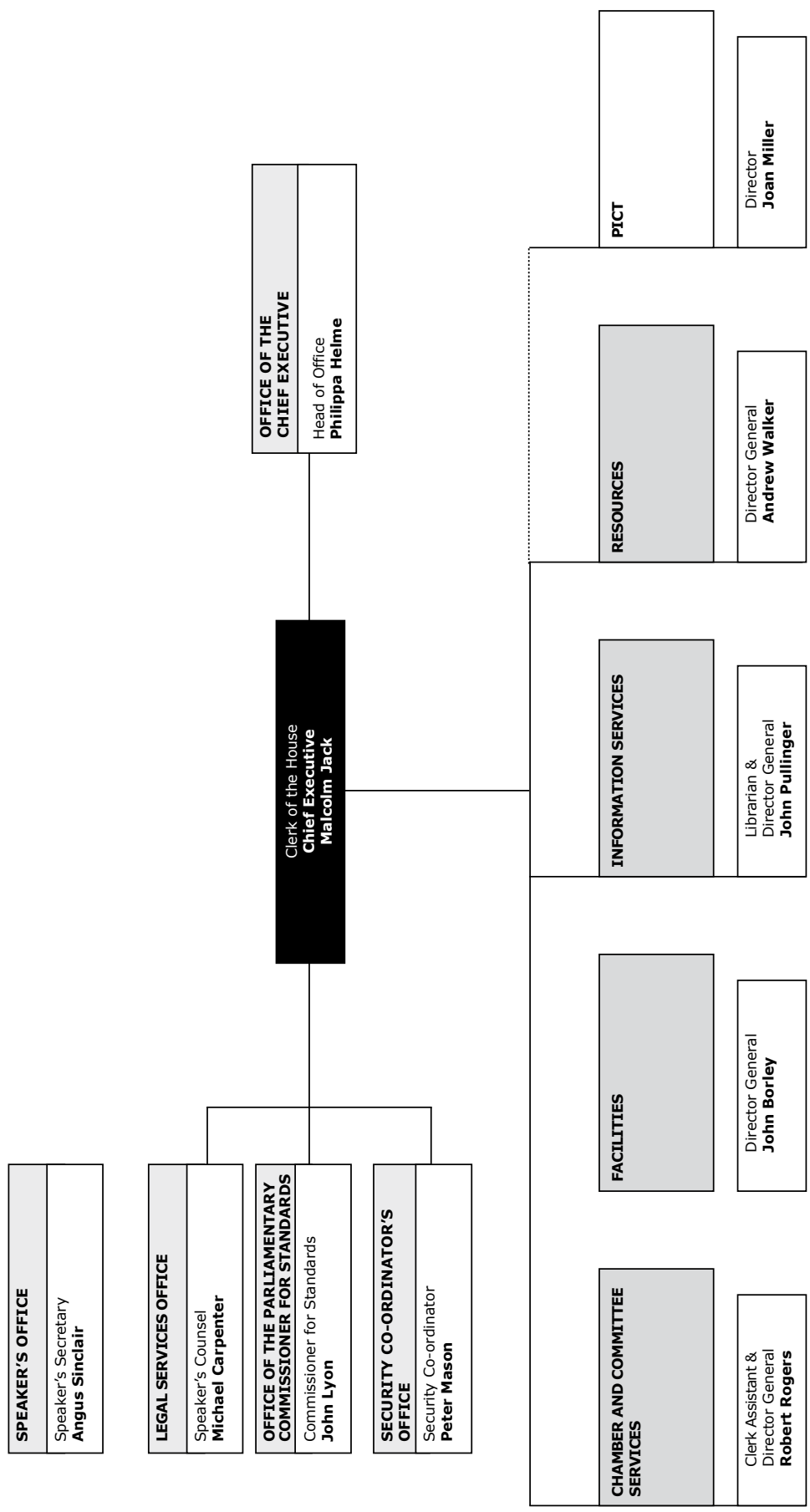
## ANNEX 2 The Governance Structure of the House of Commons Administration

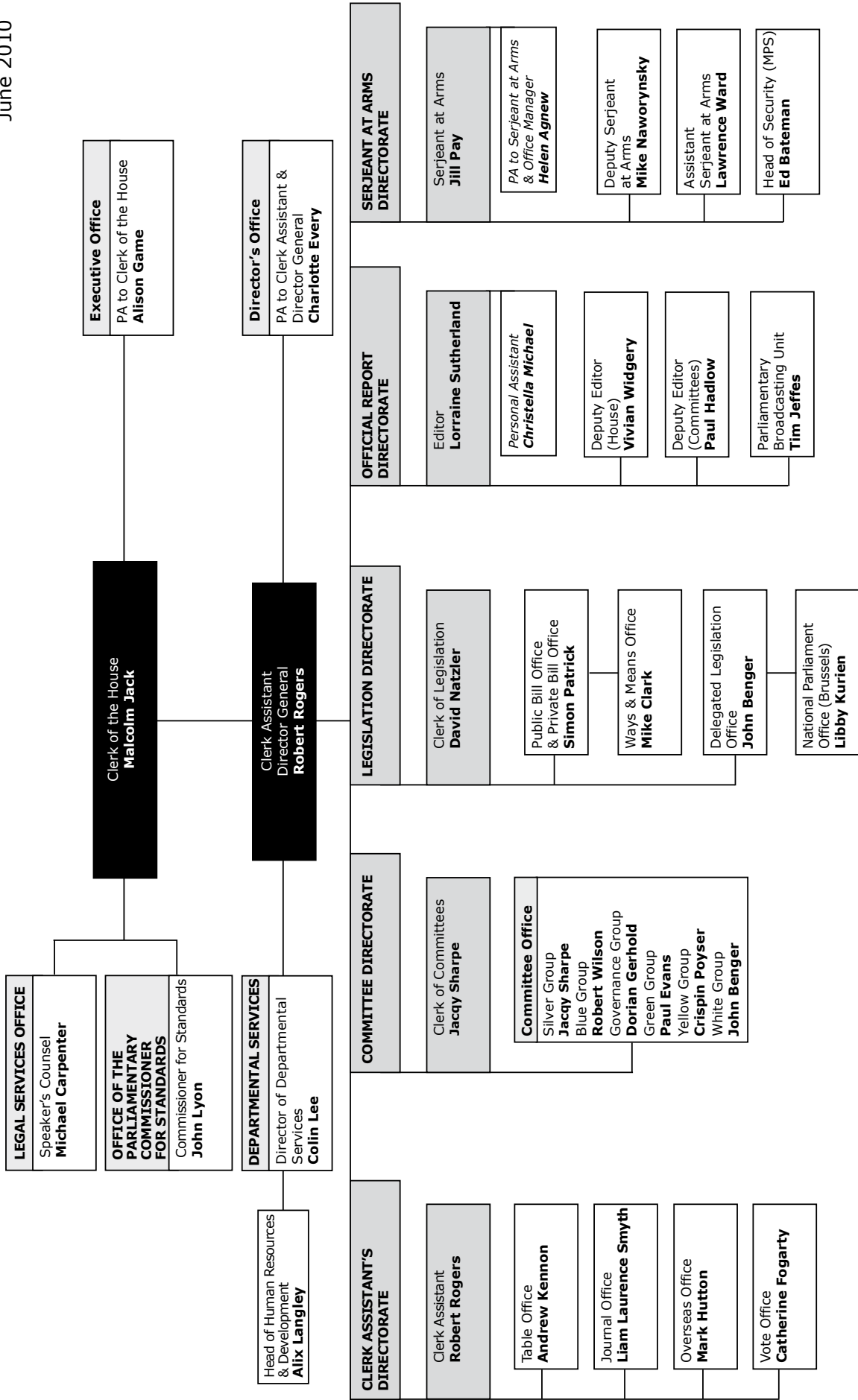


\*Joint Services with the House of Lords

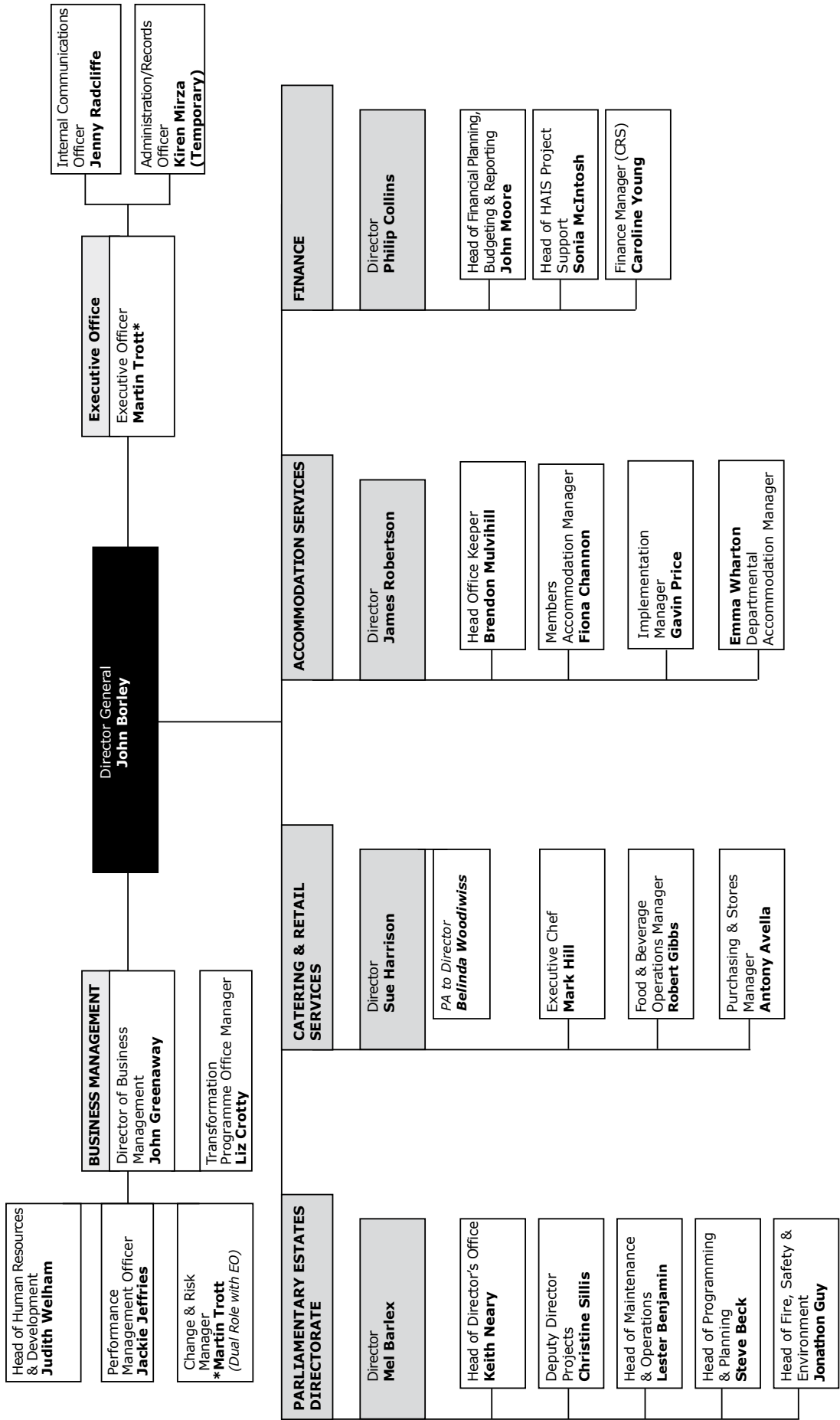
**ANNEX 3  
Organograms**

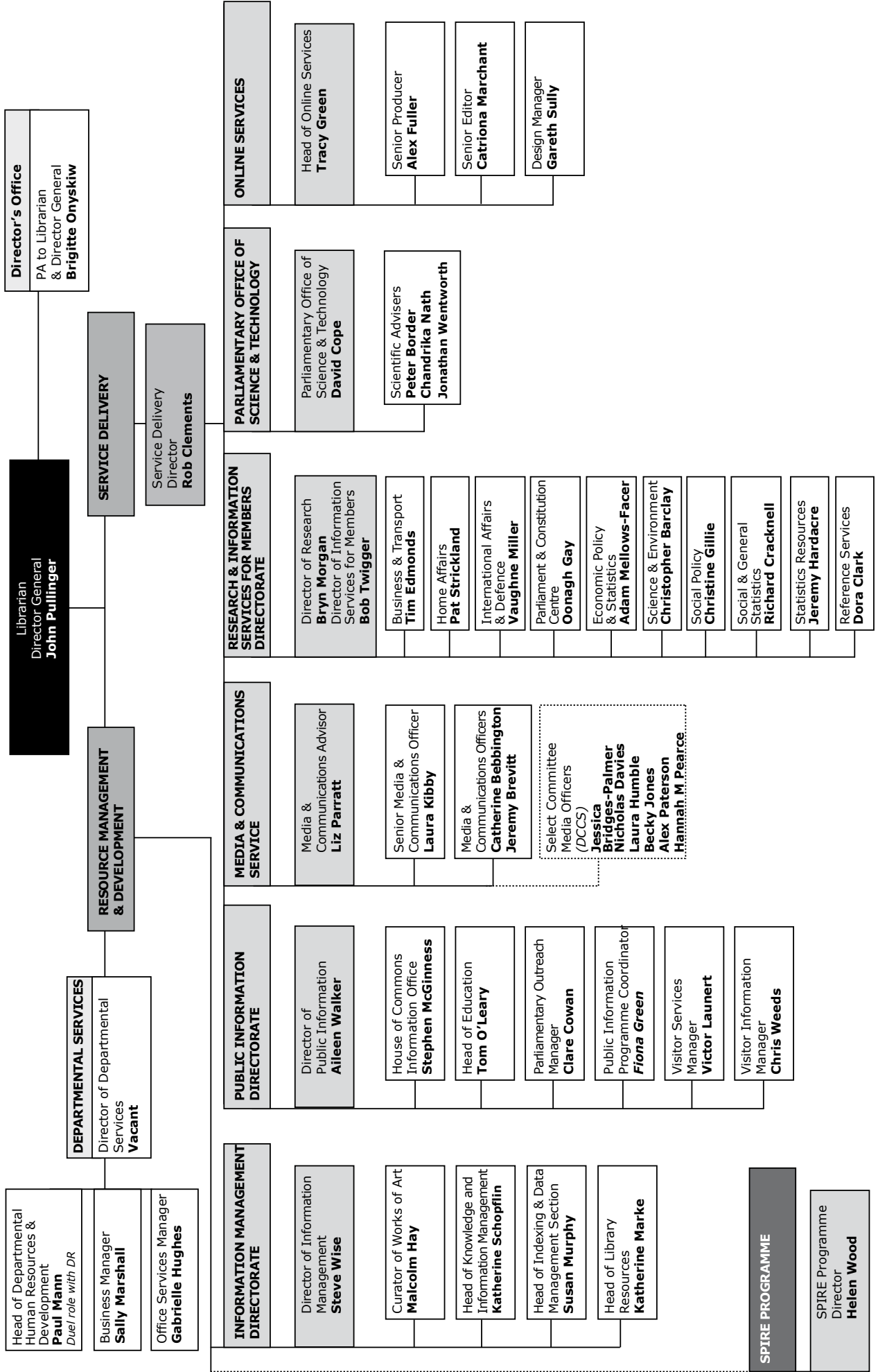
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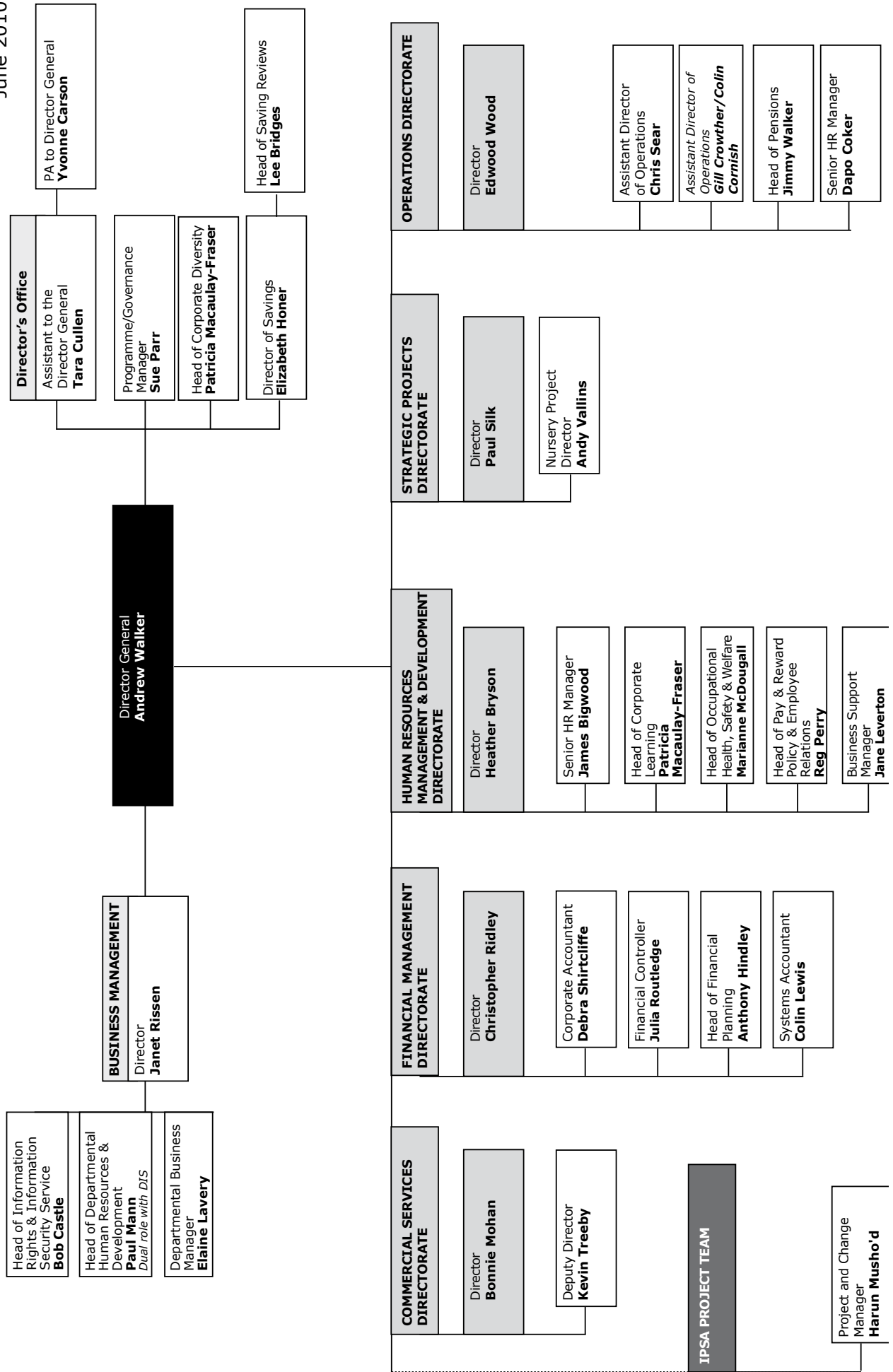


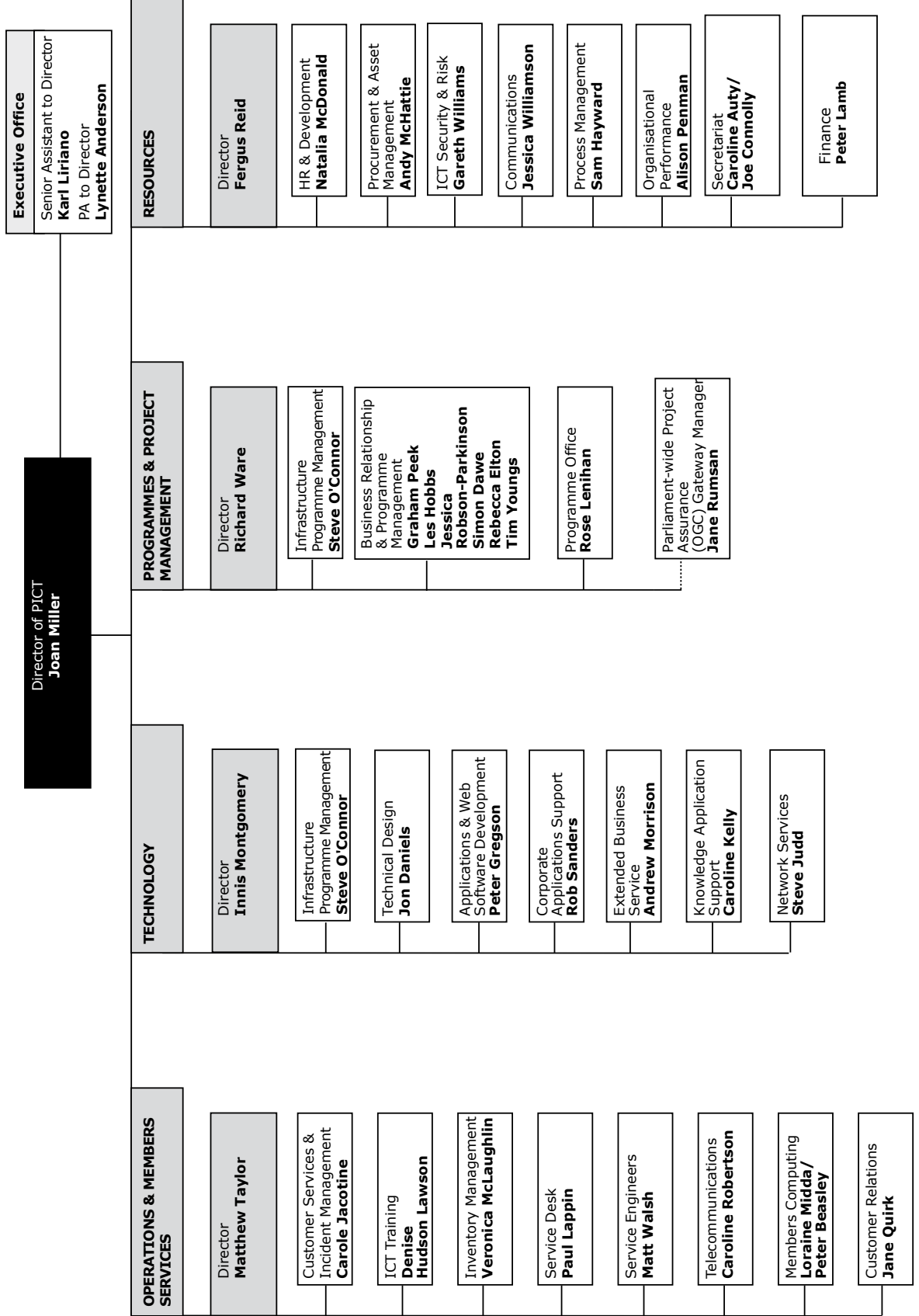
HOUSE OF COMMONS  
**Department of Facilities**  
 June 2010





HOUSE OF COMMONS  
**Department of Resources**  
 June 2010





## Administration Estimate Audit Committee Report 2009/10

### Introduction

1. This is the tenth annual report of the House of Commons Administration Estimate Audit Committee (AEAC), which was established by the House of Commons Commission on 15 May 2000.
2. The Committee was established on the recommendation of the 1999 Braithwaite review of the House of Commons Service. During 2007 Sir Kevin Tebbit KCB CMG led a further review of the management and services of the House of Commons on behalf of the House of Commons Commission, and recommended that the AEAC should be chaired by "a suitably qualified external member". That recommendation was implemented in June 2010.
3. This report sets out the activities of the AEAC in relation to audit and assurance of the Administration Estimate during the financial year 2009-10. Details of the membership, meetings and terms of reference of the Committee are included as an appendix.

### Internal Audit

#### Internal Audit work and partnership

4. The Committee routinely receives an oral report at its meetings from the Director of Internal Audit (IA), supplemented by a paper showing progress against the annual work programme and the balance between core audit and the other work undertaken by IA. The Director also circulates a written monthly progress report both to Members of the Committee and to stakeholders across the House, enabling the Committee more precisely to track progress with each audit. In 2009-10 all management responses to audits were received within the three month deadline agreed by the Committee.
5. During 2009-10 the Committee has monitored progress against IA's target of 70% of staff time to be spent on audit work. It has noted that the audit team as a whole spent an average of 77% of their time on audit work, with the Principal Auditor and Review Manager respectively achieving 95% and 90%.

6. The Committee has noted with approval the efforts of IA to increase the value it adds to the House Service. Initiatives have included a specific Value for Money review of Learning and Development, as well as focused work on project and contract management. Potential savings have been identified in specific areas including newspapers and late night transport.

7. During 2009-10 the contract for the IA strategic partner was re-tendered; the Committee agreed that Deloitte should be appointed and they began work on 1 October 2009. Under the new contract increased emphasis has been placed on focused use of the specialist skills of the strategic partner.

8. The only change in the staffing of IA during 2009-10 was the recruitment of a new administrator/trainee early in 2009-10. The two IA trainees have progressed with their professional studies.

#### Internal audits considered by the Committee

9. During 2009-10 the Committee was notified of 17 audits relating to the Administration Estimate at its four meetings, including 7 audits which were delivered up to the end of the previous financial year but after the Committee's final meeting in 2008-09. 12 audit reports were received by the Committee after its final meeting of 2009-10 and will be considered at its July meeting.

10. Audit reports are usually considered first by the external members of the Committee, who may choose to bring matters to the attention of the full Committee. Of the 17 reports considered by the external members during the year, 6 were considered by the external members only, 8 were circulated in whole or part to the Committee as take note items, and three audits were discussed by the Committee as a whole.

11. Audits discussed by the Committee dealt with a wide range of topics. An audit of financial controls found that although frameworks were generally appropriate, some controls, such as those relating to overtime payments, were not always applied as rigorously as they should be. A number of audits were concerned with corporate issues such as risk and performance management. These were found to have evolved over the course of the year at



Management Board level, but to have shown more mixed progress at Departmental level. Overall the Committee has been concerned at some of the shortcomings in procedures identified by the audits it has considered during the year, but has been satisfied that appropriate management actions have been identified to address them. It will continue to monitor the level of implementation of agreed management actions as a result of audit reviews.

12. The Committee has ongoing concerns arising from the findings of audits of control issues within the Parliamentary Estates Directorate (PED). Improvements have been noted but issues still remain and the Committee is concerned that some have not been taken forward with sufficient urgency. Management have given assurances around the improvements in controls and the focus of audit work in 2010/11 will continue until these issues are seen to be addressed. The Committee will continue its watching brief over the issues in this area, as well as procurement practice across the rest of the House.

13. The Committee considered the first value for money audit undertaken by IA, on Learning and Development, which found that significant opportunities existed for greater economy, efficiency and effectiveness in delivering this area. In addition to the management actions identified, the Committee expects that the findings of this review will be taken into account as part of the House's savings programme during 2010-11.

14. It was agreed by the Committee in April 2008 that IA should undertake follow up reviews when an audit had been issued for six months. The Committee received a number of follow-up audits including regular progress updates from monthly tracking by internal audit. The main follow up work was on Interior Design and Furnishings.

15. Further information on specific audits is included in the minutes of the Committee's meetings which are available on the Committee's website.

#### Internal audit charter

16. The House's internal audit charter, setting out the purpose, role, responsibility, status and authority

of internal auditing within the House of Commons, and outlining the scope of internal audit work, was agreed in April 2009 and is due to be reviewed annually by the Committee. The Committee is satisfied that the scope and nature of the work of IA, supported by its partnership with Deloitte, in parallel with the work of the NAO as the external auditors, adequately underpins the assessment of the Accounting Officer of the system of internal control.

#### Planning of the audit programme

17. The IA programme for 2009-10 was discussed by the Committee in April 2009 and finalised by correspondence thereafter. Over the course of the financial year, the Committee has noted with approval IA's focus on delivery, both in delivering the agreed audit programme and in timeliness of reporting. The programme for 2009-10 was revised in the year to take into account the use of IA staff in Sir Thomas Legg's review of ACA payments, given the priority of this work. Items deferred were not felt to impinge on the ability of the Head of Internal Audit to deliver his annual opinion in time for the Statement on Internal Control.

18. In January 2010 the Committee held a discussion of a draft work programme for IA during 2010/11. This was agreed at the AEAC's March meeting. The programme is moving towards a more risk-based approach, with priorities determined through discussions with managers. As recommended by the Tebbit review, the programme includes value for money reviews to be undertaken in conjunction with the NAO and the strategic partner.

#### External audit

19. The National Audit Office (NAO) has continued to provide an external audit function for the House of Commons. NAO staff routinely attend meetings of the Committee and receive all of its papers and minutes, although the Committee continues from time to time to discuss certain items of business without auditors present.

20. The external members of the Committee met

with NAO and Department of Resources staff in June 2010 to discuss the draft House of Commons: Administration Accounts for 2009-10. Following this the accounts were discussed by the full Committee on 7 July 2010 prior to being signed off by the Clerk of the House, as Accounting Officer. The main audit risks identified by the NAO related to non-current assets, the Revaluation Reserve and employee leave accrual. Amongst the issues noted by the Committee were changes in the valuation of the Estate, which had led to a supplementary estimate, and changes in pension liabilities. The Committee was keen to ensure that the reasons for these adjustments were fully explained in the management commentary to the accounts

21. The Committee received a report from the NAO on the implementation of the new International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS) and an audit completion memorandum for 2009-10. It also discussed the NAO's planned approach to auditing the House of Commons Resource Accounts 2009-10.

### **Risk Management**

22. The Committee continued to fulfil its responsibility to monitor the management of risk. An internal audit of risk management in the House Service completed early in 2009-10 found that although progress had been made in improving risk management, there was some way to go before the House Service could be considered as managing its risks effectively. The Committee considered an interim management response to the audit in July 2009. Management had accepted the audit's critique of the House's risk management and almost all its recommendations. The Committee was keen to see these implemented as soon as possible.

23. In October 2009 the Committee considered an outline project plan addressing the recommendations of the audit. In January 2010 it received an update on the progress of the project and considered the corporate risk register. In March 2010 the Committee considered the management of the risk of fraud. The Committee will continue to monitor the progress of the project, to assess whether the risk management system is generating the benefit for

management which it should.

24. The Committee invited a senior manager to three of its four regular meetings to discuss how they managed risk in their area and how their risks were linked to corporate risks. The Committee has found the dialogue it has had with these managers informative and helpful in allowing it to monitor the management of risk across the House. The Committee also invited Robert Rogers, Director General of the Department for Chamber and Committee Services and Board Member responsible for Business Continuity and Disaster Recovery (BCDR), to update the Committee on the House's BCDR plans.

### **House of Lords Audit Committee**

25. The Committee continues to share agendas and minutes with the House of Lords Audit Committee. The external members of the two Committees held an informal meeting in January 2010 to discuss matters of interest and concern. The Committee has noted with approval the efforts made by IA to increase planning and communication with colleagues in the House of Lords, including regular communication with the Lords Director of Internal Audit.

26. In March 2010 the Committee held a joint informal meeting with the House of Lords Audit Committee. Senior staff from both Houses with responsibility for the delivery of shared services updated the Committees on the governance arrangements in the areas of security, estates and ICT. The Committees agreed to hold a further joint meeting in January 2011 to consider the results of internal audits of shared services and assess the extent to which this joint consideration added value to the activities of the individual committees.

### **Conclusion**

27. The Committee has noted the "moderate" assurance given by the Director of Internal Audit to the Accounting Officer that the House's framework of governance, risk management and control is adequate and effective. Based on the internal and

external audit work which the Committee has seen and its wider knowledge of the House's activities, we consider this to be a fair assessment. As noted in the body of this report, the audit work which we have considered has shown that controls are not always fully effective and, as a consequence, the House is exposed to some degree of risk. Over the coming year we plan to monitor closely the implementation of the management action plans developed to address the failures and risks identified through audit work in the year 2009-10.

## Appendix

### Membership

1. Alan Duncan MP served as Chairman of the Committee from the start of the financial year until 19 October 2009, when the Rt Hon Sir George Young MP was appointed Chairman.
2. During 2009-10 Nick Harvey MP and Clive Betts MP served as members of the Committee. David Taylor and Alex Jablonowski served as external members. Sir Thomas Legg KCB QC resigned his position as the third external member at the end of June, in order to undertake a review of the Additional Costs Allowance. His position was taken by Mark Clarke, whose appointment, following a process of open competition, was agreed by the Commission in April 2009.
3. After the end of the 2009-10 financial year there were further changes in the membership of the Committee. Following the general election held on 6 May and Sir George's subsequent appointment as Leader of the House of Commons, the Commission decided on 21 June to appoint Alex Jablonowski as an external Chairman of the Committee. This decision was in line with a recommendation of the 2007 Tebbit Review, which was also reflected in the 2009 report *Members Allowances* published by the Committee on Standards in Public Life. The Rt Hon Rosie Winterton MP, the Shadow Leader of the House, was appointed as a member of the Committee. Following a process of open competition, Stephen Brooker took over from David Taylor as an external member of the committee on 1 July 2010.

4. The membership of the Members Estimate Audit Committee also reflects these changes.

5. The Clerk of the House, the Director General, Resources, and the Director of Internal Audit attend meetings, although they may withdraw for specific items at the Committee's, or their own request.

6. The Committee's secretary is the Private Secretary to the Clerk of the House, Hannah White. The Committee has also been supported by a part-time Committee Assistant.

### Meetings

7. The Committee met four times in the financial year 2009-10. In addition it held an informal "away morning" on 24 September 2009 and a joint informal meeting with the House of Lords Audit Committee on 17 March 2010.

8. The external members of the Committee also held an informal meeting with their counterparts in the House of Lords in January 2010, and meetings with the NAO and Internal Audit (IA).

### Information about the Committee

9. The Committee has a page on the parliamentary website on which are published its membership, terms of reference and annual reports. Minutes of meetings from January 2005 are also published online.

### Members Estimate Audit Committee

10. A Members Estimate Audit Committee was established by the House's Members Estimate Committee on 14 June 2004. It has the same membership as the Administration Estimate Audit Committee and usually meets immediately after meetings of the AEAC. The annual report of the Members Estimate Audit Committee will be published with the House of Commons: *Members Estimate Accounts 2009-10*.

### Terms of reference

11. The Committee's terms of reference during 2009-10 are shown below. A review of the terms of reference was undertaken in the course of the year and a revised version is expected to be agreed later in

2010.

On behalf of the Commission to:

- have general oversight of the work of internal audit and review, with particular emphasis on promoting economy, efficiency and effectiveness, on value-for-money studies, and on risk assessment and control assurance;
- receive and consider reports from Internal Audit (IA), together with management letters and other external audit material;
- monitor and review the external auditor's independence, objectivity and effectiveness, and to make recommendations to the Commission about the external auditor's appointment;
- advise the Accounting Officer in the exercise of his responsibilities;
- consider and recommend to the Accounting Officer the internal audit programme;
- encourage best financial practice, use of resources and governance in the House administration; and
- report annually, the report to be published with the Commission's Annual Report.



