



## Use of the Visual Identity Guidelines

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*Summary:* A review of the use being made of the administration's visual identity by offices and departments.

*Summary of actions requested:* The Management Board to agree further development work to the visual identity guidelines and the authority of the visual identity guidelines over individual office or department preferences.

### Background

1. The administration's visual identity guidelines were introduced in April 2009. Departments and offices were asked to adopt all elements of the guidelines as and when materials needed updating or reprinting. The guidelines apply to the administration's corporate stationery, publications and materials (including merchandise).
2. Templates for stationery and promotional materials were provided to staff, along with instructions on how to use them. With the introduction of MS Vista and Office 2007 staff computers defaulted to the corporate font Gill Sans MT.

### Review of the elements and application of the visual identity

3. Staff report that the visual identity guidelines and templates have brought authority and professionalism to the administration's materials because the materials are more consistent, have clear ownership and are forming a recognisable House of Lords administration brand. The stationery templates also save time and money for offices and departments.
4. The logo is widely used by offices and departments on new materials. Most stick to the correct use of the logo (in position and size); however, some have disassembled it to suit personal taste.
5. Three issues have arisen with the reproduction of the Bembo font used in the House of Lords wordmark:
  - (i) The narrow lettering makes it difficult to reproduce online and on clothing.
  - (ii) Its long horizontal length makes it difficult to reproduce in a readable size on small square objects, such as cards or confectionary.
  - (iii) The guidelines do not state that Bembo should be used exclusively for the logo font and it is usual practice to do so. Therefore, the Lords Gift Shop is using Bembo because its heritage look is viewed as more suitable than Gill Sans for merchandise.

6. The Portcullis is used as a separate logo device on some merchandise and could be seen to go beyond the original description of “an exception”.
7. The colour red (7427c) is being applied with improving consistency; colour matching for publications and merchandise should be improved further with the onus on the suppliers to comply rather than for an office or department to compromise. Without compromising the primary colour, secondary colours such as metallic ones could be introduced to offer more diversity.
8. The Gill Sans MT 12 pt has been adopted as the corporate font for the body copy in most materials, where practical. Originally Gill Sans (Light) was recommended as the body copy font; however, the heavier weight of Gill Sans MT is clearer to read on screen. Gill Sans MT is also a Microsoft standard font and, therefore, documents can be edited across the parliamentary estate without loss of formatting.
9. Verdana 10 pt black is the recommended email font; its use (font size and colour) is sporadic and many staff do not use the preferred style of email signature.
10. Design and formatting advice is proving useful for ensuring consistency within corporate documents, such as reports and newsletters, though is not widely used.
11. With the introduction of the administration’s visual identity came the expectation that offices and departments should not continue to develop their own identity at the expense of the corporate identity. This intention has not been clearly or consistently applied and some offices are still producing materials that perpetuate an office brand.

### **Review of resources and materials**

12. It is reported by most offices and departments that the stationery templates, poster and powerpoint templates are useful. The consistency and clarity offered by the templates used for the papers and minutes of the Management Board are liked and could be used by those who produce Domestic Committees papers.
13. Some staff report that the templates are difficult to find in the Vista structure and they have problems with using them. There is also a low awareness of their existence. Other templates have been requested, such as one for business cards.
14. Some offices and departments are using the corporate templates for stationery; however, many are still using up old crested letterhead stock which reflects the former widespread practice of over ordering stationery.
15. There are practical issues – such as the lack of access to colour printers, the inability to access the corporate font or templates and the need for default settings to be managed centrally – that prevent some staff from using the visual identity effectively. Sometimes the guidelines are not used or applied to documents because of a lack of awareness of their existence.

### **Review of authority**

16. While some offices and departments regularly seek advice on the application of the corporate visual identity from the Information Office or the Internal Communications Manager, some do not and so it is difficult to ensure widespread consistency. Staff have reported the need for managers to ensure the guidelines are adhered to when they check and approve documents and materials.
17. Sometimes during the design process the logo is not presented properly because a bicameral service has produced the material on behalf of the administration. External

designers such as TSO are briefed on the visual identity guidelines; however, they do not challenge design requests that do not meet the guidelines.

18. The development of the Houses of Parliament visual identity for bicameral services (currently in consultation phase) has the potential to be confused with the administration's guidelines.

### **Recommendations**

- (i) Staff at all levels should be reminded to use the visual identity guidelines and templates. They should also be asked to seek advice from the Information Office on the application of the visual identity before starting new design work or revising old materials. Information Office staff will meet with offices and departments to emphasise the need to use the guidelines correctly (Benet Hiscock). The guidelines and templates will be explained to new staff at staff inductions events (Alison Couch).**
- (ii) The templates should be checked to ensure they operate effectively in the Vista environment and further templates should be developed. The option to centralise the delivery of the default font and template settings should be pursued (Alison Couch and Andrew Morrison, PICT EBS).\***
- (iii) The logo should be developed for use online and on merchandising, and options for secondary colours should be considered (Seonaid Whitley and Catherine Bailey, Gift Shop Manager).\***

\*The cost of any improvements would be small and can be met within the existing Information Office budget.

19. If the Management Board accept the recommendations, the reconvened Visual Identity Guidelines Project Group will consider the above development work and other outstanding issues on the use and application of guidelines.

**29 June 2010**

**RHW**