MINUTES

R&R Programme Board

Meeting date	27 February 2023
Meeting location	Ministerial Conference Room, Palace of Westminster
Meeting time	14:00-16:00

Attendees

Programme Board	**Officials**
Nigel Evans MP	Dr Patsy Richards (Client Team)
Sir Geoffrey Clifton-Brown MP	David Goldstone (Delivery Authority)
Sir Edward Leigh MP	Charlotte Simmonds (Client Team/Commons)
Mark Tami MP	James Young (Client Team)
Wera Hobhouse MP	Andy Helliwell (Lords)
Lord Collins of Highbury	Judith Brooke (Lords)
Lord Sherbourne of Didsbury	Matt White (Delivery Authority)
Sir John Benger	Catherine Hallett (Commons)
Simon Burton	Michael Everett (Commons)
Steve Hails	John Thursfield (Client Team)
Sir Jonathan Stephens	Chris Dawson (Client Team)
	Jenni Singleton (Client Team)
	Gemma Collins (Commons)

1. Welcome and Standing Items

Nigel Evans MP chaired the meeting.

The Chair welcomed the Board to their first meeting. Apologies were received from Lord Morse and Paul Duffree.

It was noted that the Board had delegated authority from the R&R Client Board for day-to-day decisions related to the R&R programme, and that the Board's focus over the new few months would be to consider and agree a shortlist of options against a set of criteria agreed by the R&R Client Board.

The Chair said that due to the nature of the shortlisting work the Board would be undertaking over the next few months, hybrid meetings were not likely to be possible.

The Board observed a minute's silence following the death of former House of Commons Speaker, Baroness Boothroyd.

2. Introduction and update from Managing Director of the Client Team

The Managing Director of the Client Team (CT) welcomed the first meeting of the R&R Programme Board and provided an update. A monthly highlight report had been circulated to Board Members. There was a busy year ahead, with shortlisting of options needed by the summer recess, and a strategic case to be brought before both Houses by the end of the year, ahead of a vote on fully costed proposals in 2024/25. An Independent Advice and Assurance Panel (IAAP) had conducted a follow-up review into the Commissions' recommendations for new governance structures and the approach to the works. The Board would receive the IAAP follow-up once complete, and this would be published on the Board's website.

The Chief Executive of the Delivery Authority (DA) also welcomed the first meeting of the Board and provided an update on the work the DA had been doing in developing the options for R&R which the Board would be invited to consider. The DA emphasised that engagement with the Parliamentary community and the wider public was likely to be particularly important over the coming months.

In discussion, the following points were made by Board Members:

- That there had been significant delays to R&R and building and maintaining momentum to a fully costed vote by the Houses was vital.
- The timing of a final vote on costed proposals would be important; the Board discussed whether this should happen before or after the next General Election.
- That the Board should aim to identify one preferred option for how R&R could be delivered, to avoid both Houses having to vote on a range of options.
- The start date for R&R works by the DA would not start immediately following a vote on fully costed proposal.
- Board Members had found the briefings from officials extremely useful and asked for these to continue.

The R&R Programme Board noted the update and highlight report from the Managing Director of the Client Team

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3. Governance Arrangements

Programme Board officials talked through the proposed governance arrangements for the Board, noting that the Board's proposed terms of reference were in line with the new governance arrangements proposed by the Commissions and endorsed by both Houses last year. The Board was also invited to appoint a Deputy Chair and all members of the Board were asked to declare any relevant interests in connection with R&R.

The CT told the Board that the three-year term of the current chair of the Delivery Authority—Mike Brown CBE—would expire on 30 April 2023. Under the Parliamentary Buildings (Restoration and Renewal) Act 2019 as amended, the Corporate Officers (Sir John Benger and Simon Burton) are responsible for appointing the chair of the DA with the consent of the House Commissions. The Board was told an open recruitment exercise had been undertaken in recent months and, on this basis, the Corporate Officers propose to re-appoint Mike Brown for a further three years, subject to the consent of the House Commissions.

The Client Team also informed the Board that under the 2019 Act, the Corporate Officers can appoint up to two persons as non-executive directors of the Delivery Authority Board, and those persons must be selected through open competition. Those appointees were previously made by the Sponsor Body and the terms of the two current appointees would expire on 30 April 2023. They can be reappointed through open competition. The Board was told that the Corporate Officers propose to run a recruitment for one non-executive director with heritage experience shortly. The need for a second appointee and the experience required would be reviewed later in the year

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The R&R Programme Board:

a) Agreed its own terms of reference.
b) Agreed the appointment of Lord Morse as the R&R Programme Board's Deputy Chair.
c) Noted and declared any relevant interests in relation to R&R (see declarations of interest below).
d) Noted arrangements for future Board meetings and paper circulation.
e) Agreed the proposals regarding the publication of its information and how it will communicate with the parliamentary community.
f) Agreed to the Clerks' appointment of Mike Brown as Chair of the Delivery Authority Board, subject to the consent of the Commissions.
g) Agreed the Clerks' process for appointing up to two non-executive Delivery Authority Board Members, including one with heritage expertise.

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4. Delivery Authority Main Estimate 2023-24 and appointment of sub-board

The Chair informed the Board that the R&R Client Board had referred the DA's Main Estimate to the Board for scrutiny and approval, ahead of it being presented to the Parliamentary Works Estimate Commission (PWEC) in April. Due to the time constraints, it was proposed that a sub-board, to be chaired by Lord Morse, be appointed to undertake this task. It was noted that Lord Morse had informed the Chair that he was content to Chair the sub-board and with the proposed timetable for its work. It was also suggested that the House Finance Directors' attend the sub-board.

The approach to be followed in future years would be for the DA Estimate to come to the Programme Board before it goes to the Client Board, who approve the Phase 1 Expenditure Limit, before the Estimate is submitted to PWEC.

The R&R Programme Board agreed the appointment of a sub-board, comprising Lord Morse, Sir Geoffrey Clifton Brown and Paul Duffree, to scrutinise and approve the Delivery Authority's Main Estimate.

5. Parliamentary Engagement and Communications plans

CT officials outlined arrangements for parliamentary engagement activities planned for 2023 to support the shortlisting and development of a strategic case, noting that the 2019 Act requires that Members be consulted on R&R and for the views of the wider parliamentary community and the public to be sought.

Between March and July, a range of engagement activities are planned, including: drop-in stands in Portcullis House, the Royal Gallery and River Restaurant; a series of one-to-one meetings with Members; engagement with parliamentary committees; and engagement with House staff and Members' staff forums. To assist with this engagement, a video and leaflet had been developed. These would inform Members and the Parliamentary community of the role of the Programme Board, and set out the timeline for 2023 and beyond. The leaflet and video would also set out how Members and others can contribute their views into the collective decision-making process. The video would be used on the proposed engagement stands.

In discussion, the following points were made by Board Members:

- It was critical for the Board to develop a strategy for engagement, and to develop a clear, consistent narrative for the programme to build confidence.
- Engagement with the Parliamentary community was vital to the programme's success but successful engagement likely to be a challenge.
- The Board should be consulted on, and approve, all engagement materials being developed.
- Future materials and engagement should be ambitious and include more about the substance of R&R options and trade-offs between them not just the process, although this could build on the initial awareness raising activities scheduled in the period before Easter recess.
- Engagement should make clear that doing nothing is not an option and that there is an ongoing and expensive cost to the current maintenance of the Palace. The video should include the current cost of maintenance and repair and the leaflet needed to clearly articulate the case for change and provide more clarity on the timetable for this year.

In response, CT officials said that the requested changes to the video and leaflet would be incorporated.

The R&R Programme Board approved the internal engagement materials (leaflet and video) for use between March and July 2023.

6. R&R Options shortlisting

Officials from the CT, DA and the House of Commons and the House of Lords gave the Board a presentation on the suggested process for the shortlisting of options. The Joint Commissions' Report, endorsed by both Houses in July, identified four work areas that should be prioritised: fire safety and protection; building services; asbestos; and building fabric conservation. Other areas of work may also be considered where there is a value for money case to do so and as required by section 2(5) of the 2019 Act (the matters to which the Corporate Officers must have regard e.g. accessibility, sustainability, public engagement). In response, the DA had developed six different levels of ambition for the scope of R&R works (the Outcome Levels – 'what' is delivered by R&R). From a range of possible approaches to construction, the DA had also developed six representative scenarios for undertaking the works (the 'Construction Scenarios' – 'how' R&R is delivered). These also addressed the inherent challenges of construction presented by the Palace site and scope of work proposed. Over the next few months, the Board would be invited to shortlist these options and identify a landing zone of preferred options. Board members indicated a preference to arrive at a single, preferred option.

CT and DA officials noted that the selection of any delivery option for the R&R works will result in certain trade-offs being made, for example between improved systems and usable space, or between the ambition for R&R works and level of disruption weighed against the impact on cost and duration of the works. The relative value of these trade-offs will be a key consideration during the short-listing process alongside indicative time and cost figures.

A Board Member asked about fire safety and risk and requested that the link between fire safety and building services protection was explained more clearly to audiences. In response, it was noted that the Corporate Officers (the Clerk of the Parliaments and the Clerk of the House) are responsible for the safety of the buildings and the people within them. Officials from the DA said that fire risk tended to increase during construction and that this would be addressed in three ways: detection, prevention and protection.

A Board Member asked if the DA had engaged with staff working on Notre Dame Cathedral and Glasgow School of Art with regards to fire risk and restoration work. DA officials confirmed they had on-going professional contact with staff at Notre Dame, Glasgow School of Art and the Canadian and other Parliaments.

Board Members and attendees discussed the approach to shortlisting, and the following points were made:

- The cost of maintaining the Palace will continue to grow as the building deteriorates.
- The cost of addressing the bare minimum is expensive with work to the four prioritised work areas responsible for 80% of the total cost.
- The Board would need to consider every possible option, including solutions offered by new ways of working and the creative use of existing spaces.
- The DA emphasised that they had looked at every option but that the Board might choose to rule some out early if deemed unfeasible.
- Developing detailed plans for all potential options would be lengthy and costly.

- Time should not be wasted focusing attention on functions that should not be hosted in the Palace.
- The building must be made safer but it was unlikely to be able to completely modernise the Palace, due to the cost of transforming a Victorian building.
- The accessibility of the building was important and should be improved but it was impossible to make the Palace fully accessible for those with disabilities.
- The importance of collaboration with Parliament's strategic estates team and linking up with and learning from current maintenance work, was important, so that work is not duplicated and lessons can be learnt.
- There is on-going maintenance work to ensure the Palace remains operational and safe but existing maintenance cannot keep pace with work needed. The organisation is aware that parts of the building might eventually have to be shut-off to ensure safety.
- The induction tours Board Members had attended had been highly valuable in understanding the problems and challenges. Members were keen to make more of the cloisters in any R&R work and were receptive to including this area in the revised R&R tours for Members.
- Intrusive surveys were highly valuable; the more known now the better.
- Future working requirements should be considered, including the use of offices purchased before the pandemic and future proofing energy supply.
- A future period for discovery in the building as recommended by other organisations and parliaments undergoing refurbishment was welcomed.

The R&R Programme Board:

a) Noted the background briefing about R&R options being developed and due to be shortlisted by the Board by May 2023; and
b) Agreed the approach to shortlisting.

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7. Any other business and date of next meeting

A photographer would be present at the next meeting to take pictures of external members of the Board for the Board's website.

The date of the next meeting was 28 March, 16:00-18:30.

8. Papers to note

The Board took note of the forward look.

Declarations of Relevant Interest

Members of the House of Commons and Members of the House of Lords noted their entries in the Register of Members' Financial Interests and the Lords' Register of Interests.

Paul Duffree (external member)

Nil.

Steve Hails (external member)

- Chair of Trustees at the charity Mates in Mind, which has engaged with the R&R project regarding mental health and wellbeing support. The role comes to an end on 31 March 2023.
- In current role as Director of Business Services & HSW at Tideway, works with Matthew Duncan, who is a Lay Member of the House of Lords Commission. (Noted for transparency purposes).

Sir Jonathan Stephens (external member)

- Non-Executive Director for the National Crime Agency.
- Consultancy work for the Cabinet Office on major events planning.

Both noted for transparency purposes.