



Finance Committee

Minutes

Tuesday 4 July 2023 at 12.30pm in Committee Room 4A

Present:

Lord Vaux of Harrowden (Chair)
Lord Altrincham
Earl of Courtown
Lord Lee of Trafford
Lord Reay
Lord Stoneham of Droxford
Lord Tomlinson

together with the House of Commons Finance Committee and Lord Morse.

Fehintola Akinlose (Finance and Procurement Director) and Andy Helliwell (Chief Operating Officer) were in attendance. Vicky Rock (Director of Finance, House of Commons), Marianne Cwynarski (Director General, House of Commons), Gosia McBride (Head of Governance, House of Commons) and Richard Shoreland (MD of People and Culture, House of Commons) attended for item 2. Alison Giles (Director of Security), Catherine Hallett (Security Portfolio Director) and Calvin Brady (Finance Business Partner) attended for item 3.

Apologies

Apologies were received from Lord Davies of Brixton, Lord Levene of Portsoken, Lord Kennedy of Southwark.

Lord Morse was welcomed to join the Committee for the discussion on the deep dive into the Independent Review of Financial Management programme's progress.

A deep dive into the Independent Review of Financial Management Programme's progress F/22-23/54 RESTRICTED: FOR COMMITTEE USE ONLY

The Committee received a presentation on the progress of the implementation on the Independent Review of Financial Management from the Director General of the House of Commons and the Director of Finance. The Independent Review of Financial Management had set out 43 recommendations aiming to improve financial management and value for money in the House of Commons administration. The Commons Executive Board had accepted all of the recommendations.

The recommendations had been divided into 7 workstreams made up of 170 actions, with teams across the two Houses working on them, as many related to bicameral services. The paper mapped out the those accountable for each workstream and the progress against the

actions. The Committee noted that 6 of the 43 recommendations and 41 of the 170 actions had been completed as of July 2023.

The Committee asked how staff shortages were being mitigated. It was highlighted that the Commons were looking at a model of swifter pay benchmarking and developing communications to potential staff for the catering service. Similar work had previously been undertaken in the Lords. The implementation team noted that vacancies had been decreasing in Commons based teams overall, and that this would be brought down further with these interventions.

The Committee asked about the resourcing of the programme itself. The Committee was informed that capacity was a limiting factor in delivery. The programme had relied on internal resource, in order to ensure that they used subject-matter experts and to keep staff engaged with the programme. The team had limited resourcing, there were no plans to bring in external consultants to deliver the work, however the team would look to bring in additional resource to ensure business as usual continued to be delivered.

The Committee highlighted the difficulties of having two separate HR departments across the Houses, in particular in bicameral services. The implementation team noted that the Commons and the Lords HR departments have a strong relationship and collaborated on the recruitment work for the Parliamentary Commercial Department as part of the Commercial workstream. The two teams work together both formally and informally at all levels across the organisations.

The Committee took note of the ongoing work reforming performance management for Commons based teams, including bicameral departments such as Strategic Estates. Line managers had given positive feedback on the training which had taken place so far. The implementation team highlighted that they were keen to tackle the performance management systems and team structure of the Commons HR department, before tackling individual accountabilities and cases of underperformance. **REDACTED**

The implementation team highlighted that the first actions will be process driven. This would ensure that the right systems are in place to measure strategic activity. The Committee encouraged the team to maintain their momentum and enthusiasm when it came to addressing deeper cultural change.

Lord Morse endorsed the progress on the implementation work so far and encouraged there to be an effective change model in place once the actions had been completed.

The Committee thanked the implementation team for their work and presentation and took note of the deep dive of the programme's implementation plan detail, delivery progress and noted those accountable.

For Information: Parliamentary Security Department update F/22-23/55 HIGHLY RESTRICTED: SECURITY

The Committee considered a paper on the progress of the Security Programme, along with a general update on the Parliamentary Security Department (PSD).

Catherine Hallett introduced herself in her new role as Portfolio Director of the Security Portfolio. The Portfolio encompassed the Security Programme works and co-ordinated projects across Parliament to reduce security risk. The work would allow Parliament to target investment in order to have the biggest impact on security. It would span departments across Parliament and goes beyond physical security. These projects had been prioritised through sensitivity assessments, project team capacity, and consideration of dependencies.

The Committee had a wide ranging discussion on Security, including:

- The target operating model for physical security had been developed to give assurance that the planned capital investments were fit for purpose and necessary.
- The new policing model for Parliament, and its implementation plan would be signed off by the Metropolitan Police and the Clerks of both Houses.
- **REDACTED.**
- The Committee noted that whilst vacancies were at 10% there had been a recent recruitment drive resulting in the successful appointment of 29 people since the paper had been written. **REDACTED.**
- **REDACTED.**
- PSD had been working with Transport for London and Westminster City Council on the Parliamentary Streetscape Project. The Committee noted that it was at the concept design stage.
- The ADT security contract had been reviewed and regional security advisors had been appointed to help manage the contract locally.
- **REDACTED.**

REDACTED. The Director of Security reported that PSD were working with those who have similar agreements with the Metropolitan Police, **REDACTED**, ahead of the renewal of the contract. **REDACTED.**

The Committee took note of the update on the Security Programme, the outturn for the 2022-23 financial year, and the approved budget for 2023-24 alongside key developments, opportunities, and challenges to PSD.

Any other business

The next joint meeting was expected to be on 17 October 2023.

Small sections of these minutes have been redacted, usually for reasons such as commercial confidentiality and sensitive management information.

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