

MINUTES

R&R Programme Board

Meeting date	21 November 2023
Meeting location	Ministerial Conference Room, Palace of Westminster
Meeting time	13:00-16:00

Attendees

Programme Board	Officials
Nigel Evans MP	Dr Patsy Richards (Client Team)
Lord Morse	Charlotte Simmonds (Client Team/Commons)
Sir Edward Leigh MP	James Young (Client Team)
Sir Geoffrey Clifton Brown MP	Andy Helliwell (Lords)
Mark Tami MP	Kate Meanwell (Lords)
Wera Hobhouse MP	David Goldstone (Delivery Authority)
Lord Sherbourne of Didsbury	Matt White (Delivery Authority)
Paul Duffree	Mike Everett (Commons)
Lord Collins of Highbury	Jenni Singleton (Client Team)
Tom Goldsmith	Chris Elliott (Commons)
Simon Burton	Andy Haynes (Delivery Authority)
Dr Michele Dix	Chris Dawson (Commons)
Steve Hails	Tanya Coff (Delivery Authority)
Sir Jonathan Stephens	Catherine Murphy (Delivery Authority)

1. Welcome and Standing Items

Nigel Evans MP chaired the meeting.

No apologies were received.

Programme Board Members agreed the Minutes of the meeting of 24 October, and to their publication on the website.

2. Update from Managing Director of the Client Team and Monthly Highlight Report

The Managing Director (MD) of the Client Team (CT) updated the Board on the R&R Client Board's meeting on 14 November. The Client Board remained content with the recommended shortlist but had requested a shortened strategic case, with a fuller definition of the fallback option of 'enhanced maintenance and improvement', which Strategic Estates (SE) would be developing. The Client Board had also requested that the strategic case include more information on how SE will deliver House of Commons temporary accommodation, including sequencing. The Client Board advised that the focus of the report should be the presentation of the options for further work, and that robust cost estimates should be included at later stages in the process rather than earlier estimates now. The Board noted that a revised strategic case will be prepared for the Client Board's next meeting in early 2024, and that the published Quarterly Report would be amended to make clear that debates were not now expected in December.

Board Members discussed the update, including:

- Whether the decision not to publish the strategic case before Christmas amounted to further delay. The Board sought assurance from the CT that the Client Board's decision would not cause slippage on the programme as this is not a formal decision point under the R&R Act. The CT and Delivery Authority (DA) confirmed that slippage was not an issue at present, as the DA was able to progress design work based on the recommendations made already.
- Whether indicative costs should be included in the strategic case, while several Board Members acknowledging their immaturity, Board Members felt strongly that if indicative costs were not included in the strategic case, it would not enable a properly informed or transparent debate in Parliament.
- Assurance was sought from the CT and SE that temporary accommodation work undertaken by SE would be delivered on time. SE confirmed that it is committed to doing so and was working closely with the DA and CT to ensure alignment and appropriate interface. SE was also moving away from a linear approach to works and was thinking carefully about the sequencing of work required on the Northern Estate.
- The Accounting Officers were conscious of the risk of slippage, particularly in terms of nugatory expenditure, but their current assessment was that there was no significant delay or risk at present. The Accounting Officers had not raised this at Client Board on 14 November given this was a political decision point and the delay does not impact DA activity at this stage.
- It was noted that work on a fallback option of enhanced maintenance would need to establish what outcome level could be achieved under this.
- It was noted that the Board's views regarding costs and delays to getting political approval would be fed back to the Client Board.

The R&R Programme Board

- a) **noted** the decisions of Client Board on 14 November regarding the strategic case and associated documents.
 - b) **noted** the update from the MD of the Client Team and the monthly highlight report.
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3. Engagement and Communications

Officials from the CT and House of Lords briefed the Board on engagement and communications. The Board noted that the planned engagement on the strategic case was deferred in light of the Client Board's meeting and were provided with feedback from recent public polling carried out on R&R in early November 2023.

Board Members suggested sharing the polling feedback with Client Board when it considers the strategic case.

The R&R Programme Board **noted** the feedback from the most recent public polling results and requested the summary of findings be circulated to Board Members.

4. Critical Path (Key Milestones and Activity)

CT and DA officials briefed the Board on the critical path for R&R and the key milestones and activities which needed to happen before main works commence, currently expected in 2029. During the discussion, the following points were made:

- Clarification was sought on the key activities that would cause most delay or slippage. In response, CT said this was temporary accommodation, enabling works such as the river jetty, and the planning and consenting process taking longer than expected.
- Further clarification was sought on the risks in relation to planning approval, with Board Members noting that the two years allowed on the timeline for securing this might be ambitious. In response, DA confirmed that preparatory work and conversations were being had now.
- Board Members requested further information on temporary accommodation sequencing. CT said a paper was being prepared on a temporary accommodation plan which the Board would get in January. The Board requested an update on progress with temporary accommodation for both Houses for their December meeting.
- The DA said that no procurement contracts for main works would be entered into until costed proposals were agreed by the Houses in accordance with the Act. A Board Member said that all DA procurement contracts should have an exit strategy in them given the likely financial scale of the bigger contracts.
- External Board Members had requested a meeting to understand the critical path and the assumptions in more detail.
- There was a particular interest in heritage collections decant in the House of Lords. The Accounting Officers noted that they would want assurance on progress on this from SE. In response, SE confirmed it was an important priority and a range of options were being considered.
- The Board noted that SE would be delivering Commons temporary accommodation and questioned whether it should be the DA that delivered this, to ensure a joined-up and holistic approach to works which allowed for greater oversight and scrutiny. In response, CT said that this was ultimately a matter for the House Commissions but that the Boards would have full oversight of all R&R work delivered by both DA and SE and including assurance activity.

The R&R Programme Board **noted** the key milestones and activities identified as being on the critical path for the R&R Programme, which will inform the Client Team and Delivery Authority

5. Delivery Authority Q2 Forecast and Supplementary Estimate

DA officials briefed the Board on the DA's Quarter 2 Forecast and Supplementary Estimate, noting that the estimate was forecasting an underspend of £7.9m and proposing to return £5.1m in the Supplementary Estimate. There had been a deferral of £3.4m of non-critical works and delivered £6m in savings of which proactive management had delivered £1.9m. The Board noted that the Sub Board had considered the Supplementary Estimate on 24 November and was content, and that the Sub Board would be convening later on 21 November to consider the DA's Main Estimate, before reporting back to the Programme Board.

The R&R Programme Board **endorsed** the Delivery Authority Q2 Financial Forecast Position and proposed 2023/24 Supplementary Estimate.

6. Approval of Delivery Authority Commitment over £20m

The Board was briefed on the DA's request for approval to commit to further work for the design consultants BDP, with an additional value beyond the previous commitment authority that the Board had agreed of £2.5m + VAT. The Board noted that this was not a request for additional money but was within the overall funding already approved by the Houses for 2023/24.

The R&R Programme Board:

- a) **approved** an additional £2.5m + VAT to allow the Delivery Authority to instruct BDP (design consultants) for the period to 31 March 2024 and advise the Corporate Officers to give the equivalent approval to the Delivery Authority;
- b) **noted** that Commitment Authority is defined in the Delivery Authority Board Regulations as "the authority to commit to expenditure, e.g. to commence contract negotiations with a potential supplier"; and
- c) **noted** that further Commitment Authority will be requested when the annual estimate for 2024/25 is approved.

7. Any other business and date of next meeting

Board Members requested that the revised strategic case report be reviewed by Programme Board before it is formally considered by the Client Board.

The date of the next meeting was Tuesday 12 December, 13:00-16:00.

8. Papers to note

The Board noted the forward look.