UK Parliament

MINUTES

R&R Programme Board

Meeting date	23 January 2024
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)
Mark Tami MP	James Young (Client Team)
Wera Hobhouse MP	Andy Helliwell (Lords)
Sir Edward Leigh MP	Kate Meanwell (Lords)
Lord Sherbourne of Didsbury	David Goldstone (Delivery Authority)
Paul Duffree	Mike Everett (Commons)
Lord Collins of Highbury	Jenni Singleton (Client Team)
Simon Burton	Bev Weston (Commons)
Dr Michele Dix	Chris Elliott (Commons)
Sir Jonathan Stephens	Andy Haynes (Delivery Authority)
Steve Hails	Matt White (Delivery Authority)

1. Welcome and Standing Items

Nigel Evans MP chaired the meeting.

Apologies were received from Tom Goldsmith.

The Chair provided an update on Programme Board membership. Sir Geoffrey Clifton-Brown had stepped down as the Leader's delegate on the Board, leaving Sir Edward Leigh as the sole delegate for the Leader of the House of Commons. The Chair expressed thanks on behalf of the whole Board for the contributions Sir Geoffrey had made, particularly during the shortlisting process, and for his work on the R&R Sub Board.

The Chair also informed the Board that Lord Morse was expected to be appointed as Chair of the House of Lords Finance Committee and would become a member of the House of Lords Commission and the R&R Client Board as a result. Lord Morse was likely to be replaced on the Programme Board by Lord Vaux of Harrowden. The Chair thanked Lord Morse on behalf of the whole Board for his diligent work while serving as Deputy Chair of the Board, and in particular for all of the work he had done as Chair of the Sub Board.

The Programme Board agreed to the publication of the 12 December minutes.

There were no other matters arising.

2. Update from Managing Director of the Client Team

The Managing Director (MD) of the Client Team (CT) provided an update to the Board. The Accounting Officers, the MD of the CT and the Chief Executive of the Delivery Authority had appeared in private before the Parliamentary Works Estimates Commission (PWEC) on 10 January to discuss the DA's Supplementary Estimate. PWEC had agreed to lay the Estimate for approval. A reply would be sent to the Public Accounts Committee, in response to their letter following last October's evidence session. The response was expected to be published. Historic England's lead for R&R would be presenting an overview of emerging R&R proposals to their London Advisory Committee on 1 February. Getting feedback from LAC would be useful for the programme. Dr Simon Thurley had also completed a heritage assessment of the Northern Estate, which had confirmed again that Richmond House was a more suitable location than Portcullis House for a temporary Chamber.

The Board discussed the December highlight report. Board Members sought assurance on information management, cyber security, and whether any of the design work was at risk of delay. It was also suggested that some risks being reported had become issues and should be reported separately, recognising that they needed different management from risks.

The R&R Programme Board **noted** the update from the MD of the Client Team and the monthly highlight report.

3. Update on the Strategic Case

The Board was provided with an update on the strategic case from House of Lords and Client Team officials. A shorter strategic case had been produced in response to Client Board feedback in November. Individual briefings had been held with Client Board members to discuss the revised draft, and a final draft would be prepared for Client Board consideration in early February, although it was possible the date of the meeting might be moved.

The following points were made in discussion:

- Board Members emphasised the importance of getting on with R&R and the risks associated with further delay.
- The DA noted that further delay in reaching a decision could result in a loss of confidence and credibility in the programme by contractors/suppliers. The DA also noted that if a decision was not taken soon, the Accounting Officer of the DA might consider that he did not have sufficient authority to continue with design work or continuing to spend public money.

- It was noted that the Houses' Accounting Officers had a statutory duty to restore the Palace under the 2019 Act and that if enhanced maintenance and improvement (EMI) did not constitute 'restoration' under the Act, the Accounting Officers would have a duty to state this.
- Board Members asked about the number of people Strategic Estates had working on the EMI option. In response, Strategic Estates said they were building a team to work on this and a 'plan for a plan' could be brought to the next programme board meeting.
- A key question which any work scoping EMI would need to answer was whether it was possible to replace the services in the basement of the Palace as part of this. A Board Member said he thought Strategic Estates were not best placed to deliver this.
- The Board discussed whether delays would impact on preparation of temporary accommodation arrangements and whether EMI would require decant accommodation.
- Board Members agreed that temporary accommodation was likely to be needed for all three options, including EMI. [Redactions made due to commercial sensitivities].
- The Board's views on the likely necessity of temporary accommodation, should be conveyed to the Client Board, recognising that any decisions about acquisition of additional accommodation would be for the House Commissions.

The R&R Programme Board:

a) **noted** the oral update on the Client Board's revised strategic case; and

b) **agreed** that the Board's view on the likely need of temporary accommodation for all three options should be conveyed to the Client Board [Redactions made due to commercial sensitivities]

4. Temporary Accommodation

Client Team and Strategic Estates officials briefed the Board on temporary accommodation, including proposals to streamline the governance arrangements for temporary accommodation, and key requirements for the temporary accommodation strategy.

The following points were made in discussion:

- Board Members questioned whether the proposed timeframe for temporary accommodation was realistic. In response, Client Team officials recognised they were challenging timescales and contained an element of risk.
- A Board Member enquired whether extra resources were needed in Strategic Estates to develop temporary accommodation plans for the Commons. In response, the MD of Strategic Estates said that if extra resources were needed these would be found, if necessary by pausing other projects.
- It was noted that two different teams were delivering temporary accommodation. Board Members questioned whether there was sufficient coordination between the DA and Strategic Estates on this.
- The Board noted again that temporary accommodation was likely to be needed for all three options and asked how long it would take to confirm this for the EMI option. Strategic Estates said in response that they were prioritising looking at this and were likely to have an assessment of decant requirements for EMI in two months.

- A Board Member asked what could be done to speed up work on the QEII. [Redacted due to commercial sensitivities].
- The Accounting Officer for the Lords noted that work on QEII also required engagement with, and decisions from, Westminster City Council. This would require time and was not within the control of the Houses.

The R&R Programme Board:

a) endorsed in principle the proposals to streamline temporary accommodation project governance through use of R&R governance;

b) agreed the key requirements (outlined in paragraph 16) for the Temporary Accommodation Strategy; and

c) noted the indicative plans and timescales for temporary accommodation

5. Approval of Delivery Authority commitment over £20m

The Board was briefed by DA officials on the DA's request for approval to allow the DA to instruct Jacobs (delivery partner) and BDP (design consultants) for the rest of the Phase 1 period, noting their role in approving any DA commitment of greater than £20m against any individual contract in cumulative value.

The following points were made in discussion:

- Board Members noted the ongoing uncertainty around approval of the strategic case and sought assurances from the DA that these contracts could be terminated if necessary. [Redactions made due to commercial sensitivities].
- The DA confirmed that the contracts could be terminated at any point, with the DA only liable for reasonable de-mobilisation costs and not the full contracted amount. It was also confirmed that these contracts were dependent on the House Commissions approving the 2024/25 and 2025/26 budgets for the DA.
- The DA confirmed that they only instruct contractors to do work once decisions on the programme are made by the Boards or by the Houses, and once they have received the relevant Task Orders from the Client Team.
- If the strategic case was not agreed in February, the DA would seek clarity from the Accounting Officers and would not continue to spend public money without clear direction from the House authorities.
- Board Members requested that future highlight reports should summarise when Task Orders are issued to the DA.

The R&R Programme Board **noted** the assurances given by the DA regarding break clauses in any contract awarded, and on that basis **approved** an additional Commitment Authority of £27.3m + VAT for BDP and £10.3m + VAT for Jacobs to allow the Delivery Authority to instruct them for the rest of the Phase 1 period, assumed to cover 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2026, and advise the Corporate Officers to give the equivalent approval to the Delivery Authority.

6. R&R Quarterly Report

The Board discussed publication of the Quarterly Report, noting that some of the milestones would need updating and alignment with the response to the Public Accounts Committee. Board Members discussed the uptake of R&R tours by Members. Client Team officials noted the various forms of Member engagement, including briefing Party Groups, which ensured the number of interactions with Members on R&R was fairly high.

R&R Programme Board **approved** the quarterly report for publication covering the period October 2023 to December 2023.

7. Any other business and date of next meeting

There was no other business. The Board noted the forward look.

The next meeting would be on Tuesday 20 February.