

MINUTES

R&R Programme Board

Meeting date	20 February 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 Vaux of Harrowden	Meg Conway Wait (Client Team/Commons)
Sir Edward Leigh MP	James Young (Client Team)
Lord Sherbourne of Didsbury	Andy Helliwell (Lords)
Paul Duffree	Kate Meanwell (Lords)
Lord Collins of Highbury	David Goldstone (Delivery Authority)
Simon Burton	Mike Everett (Commons)
Dr Michele Dix	Bev Weston (Commons)
Sir Jonathan Stephens	Chris Elliott (Commons)
Steve Hails	Andy Piper (Delivery Authority)
Tom Goldsmith	Matt White (Delivery Authority)

1. Welcome and Standing Items

Nigel Evans MP chaired the meeting.

Apologies were received from Mark Tami MP and Wera Hobhouse MP.

The Chair welcomed Lord Vaux of Harrowden to his first meeting.

The Board appointed Lord Vaux as Deputy Chair of the Programme Board and Chair of the R&R Sub Board.

The Programme Board agreed to the publication of the 23 January minutes, subject to minor redactions relating to commercial sensitivity.

There were no other matters arising.

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. The Client Board was due to meet soon to consider the revised strategic case for publication. If agreed, the intention was to publish before the Easter recess. As part of the work to be done over the next year developing the three options, work would also be undertaken to look at whether the 2019 Act should be amended to enable phased approval of costs/works. Board Members requested a paper exploring the implications of amending the 2019 Act, including any implications for governance and accountability, and further information on phasing the works.

The monthly highlight report had been updated to contain a page on emerging issues in response to feedback at the last meeting. The top concerns at the moment were failure to publish a strategic case and the timeframe for developing the Enhanced Maintenance and Improvement (EMI) option. It was noted that the introduction of the EMI option in the Strategic Case could result in a risk for the Delivery Authority's ongoing procurement of partners which they were seeking to mitigate. Board Members also highlighted concerns that developing the EMI option may delay a decision on costed proposals in 2025.

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

3. Plan for developing the Enhanced Maintenance and Improvement Option

The Board was updated by Strategic Estates (SE) on the plan for developing the EMI option. This would be constraint driven with two scenarios, with assumptions needing to be agreed. SE would lead this work utilising a consultancy for the bulk of the work, which would need to be costed and complete by November 2024. The outputs from the work, in terms of costs/schedule and outcome level achieved, would be in a consistent form to the shortlisted options, to enable comparison.

In the discussion, the following points were made:

- Board Members questioned whether SE had the resourcing to deliver this work by November. In response, SE said an internal team had been identified but they would need to appoint consultants quickly. Work was not being started from scratch and would be using previous reports. However, SE recognised a key risk was the ability to start this work promptly. The Board supported expediting procurement and asked for any impediments to procurement to be highlighted to them.
- A Board Member noted concern with the EMI option, highlighting that at present it was unclear how the basement/services could be dealt with via this option. The option would also involve considerable disruption and there would be significant impact on accessibility in the Palace during the works, which may take decades.
- It was noted that there had been recent Health & Safety incidents with estate occupiers not respecting work areas.
- Board Members noted that trade-offs may be required for the EMI option and it would be important for those trade-offs to be identified and understood.
- Board Members agreed that more detail was needed on EMI, including:
 - Greater clarity on the differences between the two scenarios.

- Clarity on what might not be possible to deliver under EMI, including in terms of accessibility and risk during the works and the Outcome Level that could be achieved over time.
- What might happen to the services that support the works of the Chambers under EMI.
- What benefits achievable under the shortlisted options might be lost, or delivered later, under EMI.
- Board Members sought clarity on whether additional accommodation would be needed for decant and space under EMI. SE said this would depend on the level of decant and timing. SE agreed to bring further information to the Board on the need for temporary accommodation under EMI in April.
- Board Members noted that the sharing of information between the Delivery Authority (DA) and SE would be important. Current impediments in sharing of SE commercial information needed to be addressed, with updates on this and any other impediments identified brought back to the Board.
- The Board requested to see the questions which would be issued to stakeholders in both Houses to help inform constraints for scoping EMI. SE agreed to provide this.
- SE agreed to provide the Board with the options matrix which had been provided to domestic committee members to support decision-making on the trade-off between cost and disruption for the works to Victoria Tower.
- The Board agreed it would like regular updates, and to be consulted, on the development of the EMI option. SE said they would provide a further update in April.

The R&R Programme Board **agreed** that it would like regular updates, and to be consulted, on the development of the EMI option.

4. Palace Design Scheme Introduction

The Board was given a presentation by the DA on elements of the emerging design scheme for the Palace which respond to the strategic objectives and the agreed outcome level for R&R for the full decant and continued presence options.

In the discussion, the following points were made:

- Board Members asked about the 19% reduction of useable space within the Palace, and in response were told that this was caused by accessibility improvements, installation of new lift shafts and local interventions in parts of the Palace and application of accommodation standards for offices. Board Members suggested looking at the standards for office space requirements and assessing whether these were still relevant.
- Board Members requested a tour of the Palace and basement with the DA and Client Team to better understand the changes and impact that the design elements would have on the Palace.
- Board Members suggested that the Client Board should also be given the presentation on emerging design schemes for the Palace at a future meeting.
- A Board Member asked whether the DA's design work could continue if the strategic case was not published. In response, the DA's Accounting Officer said that the DA would need

a clear and transparent direction from appropriate House authorities to continue to spend public money.

The R&R Programme Board:

a) **noted** the progress and direction on emerging design solutions in line with the strategic objectives and features for Outcome Level 4; and

b) **agreed** that it would have regular updates on all of the design areas of focus and noted that it would receive an update on Palace Design and accessibility at its next meeting.

5. Any other business and date of next meeting

The Board noted the forward look.

The next meeting would be on Tuesday 19 March.