MMINUTES

R&R Programme Board

Meeting date	26 November 2024
Meeting location	Ministerial Conference Room, Palace of Westminster
Meeting time	13:00-16:00

Attendees

Programme Board	Officials
Judith Cummins MP	Charlotte Simmonds (Client Team)
Lord Vaux of Harrowden	James Young (Client Team)
Mark Tami MP	Andy Helliwell (Lords)
Marie Goldman MP	Michael Torrance (Lords)
Jesse Norman MP	Tanya Coff (Delivery Authority)
Paul Duffree	Matt White (Delivery Authority)
Dr Michele Dix	Katya Cassidy (Client Team)
Sir Jonathan Stephens	Meg Conway Wait (Client Team)
Steve Hails	Chris Elliott (Commons)
Simon Burton	Bev Weston (Commons)
Tom Goldsmith	Jenni Singleton (Client Team)
	Emma Downing (Client Team) (for item 6)
	Chris Dawson (Client Team) (for item 6)
	John Thursfield (Client Team) (for item 6)

1. Welcome and standing items

The Chair welcomed everyone to the first meeting of the R&R Programme Board of the 2024 Parliament.

Apologies were received from Lord Collins and Lord Greenhalgh. It was noted that Lord Greenhalgh will be replaced on the Programme Board.

The Programme Board agreed to the publication of the minutes of the meeting on 21 May.

The Chair notes that the R&R Programme Board Sub Board had held its first meeting of the new Parliament last week.

2. Update from Managing Director of the Client Team and monthly highlight report

The Managing Director of the Client Team updated the Board, including on:

- governance, including new members of the Board and that Lord Greenhalgh is unable to take up his position on the Board and will be replaced in due course, inductions for Client Board members and the upcoming Client Board meeting.
- the independent review of governance: the review had concluded and David Orr was meeting with the Clerks next week to finalise.
- assurance: independent external technical assurers are in place, terms of reference for fire, health and safety review being finalised, and new Client Team assurance representative had been recruited.
- resourcing: Russ McMillan had accepted substantive DA CEO post, DA is reviewing budget and organisation for 25/26 and Board members had already been informed about proposed reductions in staffing resource.
- the Programme highlight report.

Board members raised questions about the third party appointment for the assurance work, especially around their technical qualifications to challenge design assumptions. It was reiterated that a note is being prepared on the tendering process and successful bid, including information on the contractors they are using for the design element.

Board members raised concerns about getting to the point of a decision without all options being at the same level of maturity and the importance of genuine comparability, including understanding risk/reward trade-offs of each option.

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

3. Governance matters

Client Team officials briefed the Board on a request from the TUS to be co-opted as a member of Programme Board.

Board members considered that the Programme Board needed to improve its engagement including with trade unions, especially on matters relating to health and safety, but considered that, as the House of Commons Trade Union Side President could not represent all parliamentary staff, membership of the Board was not appropriate. Board members favoured the option of increasing the opportunities for trade union staff representatives to join Programme Board meetings.

The R&R Programme Board:

a) **agreed** that co-opting the House of Commons Trade Union Side should not be recommended to Client Board; and

b) **agreed** to offer a suite of actions as options for discussion with the unions for increased engagement, to be kept under review with the unions to ensure effective engagement.

4. Programme plan for 2025

Client Team, Delivery Authority and Strategic Estates officials briefed the Board.

The DA updated the Board that, having looked further at three different ways of phasing of the continued presence option, they were proposing to take forward one option. Board members requested further information on phasing variants and specific examples of how the different options have been merged.

Some Board members were concerned that matters were going through multiple levels of approval before the Board saw information on it and requested to see information as early as possible even if draft.

There was discussion around decant of the Chambers and whether decant of the Commons Chamber was necessary under the enhanced maintenance and improvement option. Strategic Estates clarified that the HoC Chamber is only required to decant during BAU+; under BAU, both Chambers could remain in the Palace. The Board asked for further clarity and detail on the BAU vs BAU+ variants, and Chamber decant.

Board members raised concerns about the governance relating to a temporary/resilient chamber in Richmond House. Questions were raised about what aspects of the Richmond House works were actually on the critical path. Board members were of the opinion that design work should continue in line with the recommendation of the strategic case.

The Board asked for further detail on the review of the strategic outline case for refurbishment of the northern estate.

The R&R Programme Board:

- **noted that work is being undertaken to consider a realistic start date for works;**
- **endorsed in principle the continuation of work on the EMI option subject to further scrutiny of the forecast costs by its Sub Board;**
- **noted the work to assess the case for acquisition of QEII across all three R&R options, taking into account wider Parliamentary estate planning considerations;**
- **endorsed the proposal that work continues critical path activities for the fit out of QEII for House of Lords temporary accommodation; and**
- **endorsed the continued progression and seeking of access to QEII to undertake surveys.**

The R&R Programme Board:

- **endorsed the continuation of work on phasing but requested further information about the down selection of phasing variants of the continued presence option;**

- **requested further information on the review of the strategic outline case for refurbishment of the northern estate; and**
- **requested further information on the emerging conclusions of the EMI temporary accommodation work, including on the detail of BAU vs BAU+ and Chamber decants.**

5. Early R&R opportunities progress update

Client Team and Delivery Authority officials briefed the Board.

Board members noted the potential of using Victoria Tower for office space which would provide flexibility for accommodation under some of the options and requested speedy decision making on its use.

The question of whether the river jetty would be required under EMI was raised—Strategic Estates officials noted that they were reviewing this matter but anticipate that it will be required.

The R&R Programme Board noted:

a) **the updates made on progressing potential early R&R projects since Programme Board discussed them in September 2023;**
b) **the continued work to identify opportunities for the early delivery of works and benefits; and**
c) **the proposed governance route to agree proposals for design and fit out of the internal Victoria Tower spaces.**

6. Engagement update

Client Team officials briefed the Board.

Board members noted the importance of engaging with new Members. Client Team officials updated the Board that there would be an email going out in the Chair's name to Members. A Board member noted that the Whips' office could help signpost Members to engage with R&R.

There was some discussion around engagement activity from July – December 2025. Board members discussed that providing information to Members was not straightforward and needed careful thought about how trade-offs are characterised. There was some debate amongst the Board as to what information should be provided and to whom—noting the benefits of Members and staff having sufficient detail to engage and give feedback, but also noting that ultimately it was for the Boards to consider all the detail and make a recommendation to the Houses.

A Board member recommended revisiting the early videos created for R&R.

Public polling info would be shared as a paper to note for the next Programme Board meeting.

The R&R Programme Board:

a) agreed the proposed overall objective for the Member Consultation Strategy and its supporting commitments; and

b) approved the future approaches to engagement.

7. Any other business and date of next meeting

Lord Vaux had been a witness at the Holocaust Memorial Bill Select Committee that morning. Planning for both the Holocaust Memorial and R&R would need to continue to be coordinated.

The date of the next meeting would be 17 December 2024.