

MINUTES

R&R Programme Board

Meeting date	21 January 2025
Meeting location	Ministerial Conference Room, Palace of Westminster
Meeting time	13:00–16:00

Attendees

Programme Board	Officials
Judith Cummins MP	Katya Cassidy (Client Team)
Lord Vaux of Harrowden	Tanya Coff (Delivery Authority)
Marie Goldman MP	Chris Elliott (Commons)
Mark Tami MP	Andy Helliwell (Lords)
Lord Collins of Highbury	Danielle Nash (Client Team)
Lord Mackinlay of Richborough	Charlotte Simmonds (Client Team)
Dr Michele Dix	Jenni Singleton (Client Team)
Paul Duffree	Michael Torrance (Lords)
Sir Jonathan Stephens	Bev Weston (Commons)
Simon Burton	Matt White (Delivery Authority)
Tom Goldsmith	James Young (Client Team)
	Jonathan Frost (Delivery Authority) (for item 3)
	Andy Piper (Delivery Authority) (for item 3)
	Catherine Murphy (Delivery Authority) (for item 4)
	Andy Haynes (Delivery Authority) (for item 5)

1. Welcome and standing items

The Chair welcomed everyone to the January meeting of the R&R Programme Board and welcomed Lord Mackinlay to his first meeting.

Apologies were received from Steve Hails.

The Programme Board agreed to the publication of the minutes of the meeting on 17 December 2024.

The Chair updated the Board on the response to the e-mail to all Members which had been sent the previous week and had received a positive response.

The Board discussed the form of its recommendations to the R&R Client Board and noted that it would discuss its interim update to the R&R Client Board at the February Programme Board meeting.

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:

- the Programme Highlight Report for November, including changes that had been requested by the Board which would take effect from February;
- the requests from the Board at the December meeting for more detail on the options assessment criteria which would be presented to the Sub Board and Programme Board in February;
- the House of Lords annual debate on the R&R Annual Progress Report which had taken place on 16 January 2025;
- plans to share the initial findings of technical independent assurance with the Sub Board in February and the findings of the independent health, safety and fire review with the Programme Board in April;
- the Sub Board, which would focus on the Programme estimate from February, starting with underpinning assumptions to cost estimates, cost of delay and wider value of the Palace;
- engagement: continued productive engagement with Government officials, a meeting between the Chair and the House of Commons Trade Union Side President, the commencement of work on technical engagement on disruption, and plans to use Cloister Court Oratory for briefings and displays, material for which was under development.

It was noted that the DA had concluded its collective consultation and it was Tanya Coff's final Programme Board meeting as interim CEO. Thanks were expressed to Tanya and the DA leadership team.

The Board discussed internal works in Victoria Tower. It was noted that the Lords Commission was due to discuss internal works in Victoria Tower in May and the outcome would be incorporated into R&R assumptions and planning after that point.

The Managing Director of Strategic Estates confirmed that information on scope and cost for House of Commons temporary accommodation and EMI, including its temporary accommodation demand, would be available to schedule.

The Board discussed temporary accommodation options and requested a paper on temporary accommodation options which had been previously considered and not progressed and how decisions had been taken to progress with the current options.

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

3. Consideration of costed proposal options: scope of the shortlisted options

Delivery Authority and Strategic Estates officials presented to the Board on the concept designs for the end-state Palace.

Board members raised questions about the impact of work to improve accessibility (which was not just making routes accessible but ensuring there were accessible facilities in suitable locations) to overall costs, and how much of a difference a change to the accessibility outcome would make to cost and what was being delivered. Board members noted that this had been discussed at length in the decision on the agreed scope (outcome level four) and noted the positive impact of accessibility deriving from the priority fire safety interventions.

The Board discussed the reasons behind the loss of usable space: these mainly related to the priority fire safety and building services interventions but also included the impact of making offices and other spaces more accessible. The Board was assured that there was sufficient space across the Estate for all Members and their staff to fit, even with the reduced space in the Palace.

Board members asked questions about the cost implications of restricting fire to the room of origin.

The Board discussed the proposed larger basement and second tunnel in the EMI option and potential risks around disruption to the building fabric and any mitigations required. It was agreed that the Client Team would provide a joint update on tunnelling and related temporary/end-state services at a future meeting.

Board members noted the possibility that visuals of the end-state Palace used during engagement might cause stakeholders to think that large proportions of the cost were due to “gold-plating”, even if they represented a small proportion of costs and were driven by other requirements.

The Board asked about discussions with Westminster City Council and Historic England on proposed changes to the Palace.

The Board noted that open plan office provision for Members was generally not favoured but breakout spaces would be valued. Board members asked about bicameral catering provision—it was noted that bicameral catering arrangements were an operational choice and no changes to the design would be made unless a decision was made by the two Houses to change the catering operations in this way.

The Board discussed the critical path of the works and the impact of the September sitting.

The R&R Programme Board:

- a) **noted** how the preferred scope is delivered by the concept designs for the shortlisted options and the extent to which the concept designs deliver the priority works, Parliament’s requirements and the benefits of the Programme;*
- b) **noted** the proposed concept design as the basis for the upcoming options appraisal process, noting that the benefits, costs, schedules and other data is derived from delivery of this design; and*
- c) **considered** the variances in design between the options at this stage and discussed any areas of the design that required further consideration and engagement, either as a result of the design proposals or their associated trade-offs.*

4. R&R costs 2025/26

The Board was briefed on R&R costs for financial year 25/26, including on the reduction to current levels of Delivery Authority spend by 35%. The Chair of the Sub Board reported back on the Sub Board's deliberations.

The Board discussed the costs and timeline for the strategic partner procurement. The Delivery Authority confirmed that there would be no external publicising of a preferred option with likely costs until after the Houses have agreed the costed proposals.

The Board discussed how the EMI timetable, including additional design works and Member engagement, fitted with the wider R&R timetable.

It was confirmed that further work was planned to ensure the commercial strategy was appropriate for all options.

The R&R Programme Board:

- a) **endorsed** the 2025/26 Annual Estimate (£53m);*
- b) **noted** the 2026/27 forward look (£35m), and the Phase 1 Expenditure Limit (P1EL) and Phase 1 Cost Assessment (P1CA) (both £475m to the end of 2025/26);*
- c) **noted** the planned Client Team costs for financial year 2025/26; and*
- d) **noted** the planned costs for continued development of the EMI option.*

5. Approval of Delivery Authority commitment over £20m

The Board was briefed on the proposed additional commitment authority of £1.0m for the Jacobs contract.

The R&R Programme Board:

- a) **approved** the additional commitment authority of £1.0m (plus VAT) for the Jacobs Project, Programme and Cost Management contract; and b) **noted** the modification of the Jacobs contract pursuant to the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 to increase the Contract Value from £106m to £110.6m (plus VAT).*

6. Independent review of effectiveness of R&R governance

The Board agreed that it would allocate private time during Board meetings, by exception, and that the Chair would discuss it on a case-by-case basis for each meeting with the secretariat.

Board members discussed its feedback for the R&R Client Board on the possible establishment of a co-ordination working group and noted that while it did not want to recommend any additional structures, good practice of liaison and discussion between Chairs was welcome.

It was confirmed that the R&R Programme Board and R&R Client Board external members would continue to meet regularly, with timing aligned with the R&R Client Board schedule.

Board members noted that they did not have regular interaction with the Delivery Authority Board Chair and suggested that there should be improved transparency between the Delivery Authority Board Chair and the R&R Programme Board.

7. Quarterly progress report: October to December 2024

*The R&R Programme Board **approved** the quarterly report covering the period October to December 2024.*

8. Any other business and date of next meeting

The date of the next meeting would be 25 February 2025.

The Board noted the forward look and the R&R engagement report.

The Board agreed to discuss the upcoming work of the Sub Board at its next meeting.