



Meeting Minutes Sponsor Board

Meeting date	16 November 2020
Meeting location	Virtual Meeting
Meeting time	3.30pm – 6.30pm

Members Present
Liz Peace, Chair
Lord Best
Lord Carter of Coles
Lord Deighton
Damian Hinds MP
Brigid Janssen
Marta Phillips
Baroness Scott of Needham Market
Tommy Sheppard MP
Mark Tami MP
Simon Thurley
Simon Wright

Attendees	Item
John Benger, Clerk of the House of Commons	All
Ed Ollard, Clerk of the Parliaments	All
Sarah Johnson, CEO Sponsor Body	All
Lucy Owen, Chief of Staff, Sponsor Body	All
Michael Torrance, Head of Secretariat, Sponsor Body	All
Johanna Porter, Board Secretary, Sponsor Body	All
Karen Watling, Executive Assistant, Sponsor Body	All
David Goldstone, CEO, Delivery Authority	All
Matt White, Programme Director, Delivery Authority	All
Claire Maugham, External Communications Director, Sponsor Body	All
Mike Brough, Programme & Assurance Director, Sponsor Body	6
Ian Todd, Programme & Assurance Advisor, Sponsor Body	6
Janet Campbell, HR Director, Delivery Authority	8
Scott Young, Skills Employment & Education Lead, Delivery Authority	8
David Yass, Strategic Review Lead, Sponsor Body	9



1. Welcome, agenda, declarations of interest and health safety & wellbeing

1.1 The Chair welcomed those present to the meeting.

1.2 The Chair gave the Board an overview of her engagement activities since the last meeting. She said that all her meetings had involved updating stakeholders on the progress of the Strategic Review. A regular meeting had been established between Liz Peace, Sarah Johnson, David Goldstone, and Mike Brown (the Delivery Authority's CEO and Chair respectively) and Ian Ailles, Director General of the House of Commons and Isabel Coman, Managing Director, In-House Services & Estates, House of Commons to help build a stronger relationship with the Parliamentary In-House Services team. The meetings were proving to be beneficial.

1.3 The Chair had also met with Dame Eleanor Laing. It was anticipated that Dame Eleanor would be appointed as Chair of the Estimates Commission at its first meeting on 8 December. The meeting had been positive, and Dame Eleanor was aware of the challenges faced by the Programme.

1.4 There were no apologies for the meeting. Tommy Sheppard joined the meeting late, at 4.15pm, due to an urgent question in the chamber.

1.5 The Board meeting agenda (SB/20/090) was revised from its initial circulation. The Chair explained that following the formal meeting the Board would have a closed session, with Sarah Johnson the Sponsor Body CEO, to discuss the progress of the Strategic Review, and their relationship with the R&R Delivery Authority (DA) Board. It was asked if time could be scheduled for the Board to meet in private on a more regular basis, both with and without the CEO.

1.6 There were no declarations of interest made relevant to the items on agenda.

2. Minutes of the previous meeting and matters arising

2.1 **DECISION:** The minutes of the previous meeting (SB/20/091) had previously been APPROVED by correspondence. No further comments were raised.

2.2 **DECISION:** The Board NOTED the progress made against the action log (SB/20/092). It was said that work against the PAC report's recommendations would be tracked from the next (December) Sponsor Body report.

2.3 There was a continued assumption that the QEII building would return to being a conference centre following any potential Lords decant. Sarah said that she was meeting with Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government (MHCLG) to discuss further. It was noted that MHCLG had retained control over the building rather than it being handed over to the Government Property Agency (GPA).

2.4 It was noted that any potential designation of the Northern Estate Programme (NEP) remained on hold.



3. Sponsor Board Progress Report

(SB/20/093)

Period: October 2020

Official: Sarah Johnson, CEO, Sponsor Body

3.1 The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) gave the Board an overview of the work of the Sponsor Body for the period. She said that the primary focus for the Executive Team had been the Strategic Review which would be discussed later in the meeting.

3.2 The following points were raised and noted:

- 3.2.1 The health, safety & wellbeing of staff remained important as work continued remotely. Staff were being encouraged to adopt a flexible working pattern and get outside during the daylight hours. Several virtual social events had been organised, and there was mental health support available if people needed it.
- 3.2.2 It was reported that there was an underspend at Q2. Sarah and Gurdip Juty the Finance and Corporate Services Director would be doing a thorough review of the finances at the end of Q3. The team had been focussed on the production of the Business Plan.
- 3.2.3 Work was ongoing with Parliamentary colleagues in determining the requirements that would be needed to inform the outline business case (OBC).

3.3 **DECISION:** The Board NOTED the Sponsor Body Progress Report for October 2020.

4. Delivery Authority Programme Report

(SB/20/094)

Period: September 2020

Official: David Goldstone, CEO, Delivery Authority
Matt White, Programme Director, Delivery Authority

4.1 The Programme Director updated the Board on the work of the DA for September 2020. Palace design integration was continuing, and the findings from the Strategic Review were being reviewed.

4.2 The following points were raised and noted:

- 4.2.1 Work was continuing to define the requirements for the OBC. Survey work was recommencing, but slightly behind plan. The specifications for the non-intrusive survey work were being agreed. A dedicated resource had been brought in to help prepare the tender documents for the intrusive survey work, to ensure value for money (VfM). Delays to the work had been in part due to the diversion of resource to the Strategic Review.
- 4.2.2 It was reported that progress on the plans for RIBA Stage 2 work would be updated in the December report.
- 4.2.3 It was noted that there was an underspend of approximately £1.5million for the period. £1.2 million of this had been ear-marked for office refurbishment which was no longer required.



- 4.2.4 The Board was updated on the DA's top risks, which included the decision-making processes, and the heritage collections decant work. For heritage collections, mitigation included a programme of better engagement which would help clearly define roles and responsibilities. A small team had been put together to examine whether there was any duplication of work.
- 4.2.5 The building services risk had been reduced to reflect that BDP had brought in extra leadership to help with the design services.
- 4.2.6 It was reported that the production of the heritage task brief had been a big step forward. In putting together the RACI several gaps and uncertainties had been identified, which the DA were now working to resolve with the House heritage teams.
- 4.2.7 It was explained that the DA were also working with the Archive Programme.
- 4.2.8 The business plan was being developed. The funding proposals were being reviewed to make sure that they were within the previously estimated Programme budgets and expectations, and as taut as possible.
- 4.2.9 DA and Sponsor teams had worked together on priorities for the Programme for the next six months. These would include, survey work, user requirements gathering, and progressing scheduled activity whilst ensuring that any work on the QEII aligned with both planned Programme activity and the outcomes of the Strategic Review. There would be increased engagement with the In-House, heritage and masterplanning teams to develop a shared narrative.
- 4.2.10 It was anticipated that, following a period of intense engagement, the first principles of the masterplan would have been agreed by the end of the calendar year.
- 4.2.11 Supporting the strategic review had been the overarching priority for the DA for the period.

4.3 **DECISION:** The Board NOTED the Delivery Authority Programme Report for September 2020.

5. PRA: Six-Month Review

(SB/20/095)

Official: Michael Torrance, Head of Secretariat, Sponsor Body

5.1 The Board noted that the review had been a light touch one but had also provided an opportunity for the parties to take stock of the relationship more generally. It was anticipated that the revised draft would be published by the end of November.

5.2 The following points were raised and noted:

- 5.2.1 It was noted that the changes to the PRA had mostly concerned housekeeping matters, as well as some refinements in the light of the PRA's operation since April 2020. It was anticipated that there would be more substantial changes to the document resulting from the 12-month review, and a number of actions had already been agreed in that regard.



- 5.2.2 It was agreed that the PRA was functioning as intended and had helped to resolve some important issues, including the approach to standards. Outstanding matters to be resolved as part of future reviews included the handover procedure.
- 5.2.3 A continued programme of education was needed to ensure that new starters were familiar with the content of the PRA. Wider awareness of the document needed to be raised, as otherwise its purpose would be undermined.
- 5.2.4 The Board discussed whether the PRA would require revision to accommodate any phased approach to the works. It was noted that the agreement of further RACIs may help in this regard. A substantial review of the PRA had already been scheduled ahead of the delivery phase of the Programme and the 12-month review was anticipated to pick up the changes required to deliver the OBC. The PRA was a living document that would continue to evolve during the Programme's lifetime.

5.3 **DECISION:** The Board ENDORSED the outcome of the six-month review of the Parliamentary Relationship Agreement, including the amendments to the text and the planned work which will be conducted by the parties in the run up to the 12-month review.

6. PDA: Six-Month Review

(SB/20/096)

Official: Mike Brough, Programme & Assurance Director, Sponsor Body

Ian Todd, Programme & Assurance Advisor, Sponsor Body

6.1 The Programme Assurance Director told the Board that the PDA has undergone a similarly light touch review to the PRA. The changes to the PRA had been reflected in the PDA as part of the 'flow-down'.

6.2 The following points were raised and noted:

- 6.2.1 There had been 21 areas of change, 12 of which had been direct flow-downs from the PRA, and the other nine had been a general refinement of the text and definitions and tidying up of clauses. Areas that had been missed previously or reflected activities that had been completed were updated.
- 6.2.2 There had been no major changes to the PDA; it was anticipated that the 12-month review would be more substantial. The team were confident that the PDA and PRA were working together as they should be.

6.3 **DECISION:** The Board APPROVED the proposed changes to the PDA, following the 6-month review, and to authorise Sarah Johnson to sign the updated PDA on behalf of the Sponsor



7. Public Engagement Strategy

Official: Claire Maugham, External Communications Director, Sponsor Body

7.1 Claire Maugham was welcomed to her first meeting of the Sponsor Board as the new Communications Director. She briefed the Board on the proposed approach to the Public Engagement Strategy. The Board would see the final paper at its December meeting.

7.2 The following points were raised and noted:

- 7.2.1 A lot of work had been done in the early phases of the Programme to get a communications team up and running. The team were now checking in on all communications activities to build on the good foundations that had been established. There was a particular focus on internal communications and supporting staff's mental health and well-being while working remotely.
- 7.2.2 The Programme's social media presence was being developed as a platform for engaging a range of audiences, including colleagues and close stakeholders.
- 7.2.3 The early findings of the Strategic Review indicated that a clear, consistent, and repeatable narrative was important, as were the messages regarding jobs, skills, and apprenticeships for the Programme.
- 7.2.4 The Strategic Review communications strategy would focus on the benefits of R&R and explain the Review's recommendations and their implications for Members in being part of a major project which would be their 'gift to the future'.
- 7.2.5 Qualitative research was carried out during the summer. The team learned via focus groups and deliberative panels with members of the public that many people felt a deep emotional connection with the Palace regardless of where they were in the country. The public were also able to separate the current political climate from the need to restore the building. Views on costs were nuanced and were interlinked with a desire for the building to 'practise what it preached' in terms of carbon reduction and accessibility.
- 7.2.6 Two of three proposed deliberative panel phases had been held. Each had comprised of four sessions with six people in each. They had been qualitative in nature and designed to look at specific detail. A cross section of ages and professions had been included.
- 7.2.7 It had emerged as important to members of the public that R&R should not be a London-centric programme, and in leading by example there should be significant support for small and medium-sized businesses to allow them to tender, successfully, alongside larger companies. The Investment Committee would be looking at the commercial strategy in the next week with a focus on how to support the small specialist suppliers and firms that might be put off by the cost and complexity of bidding for work in such a large programme.



8. Skills, Employment & Education Strategy

(SB/20/097)

Officials: Janet Campbell, HR Director, Delivery Authority

Scott Young, Skills Employment & Education Lead, Delivery Authority

8.1 Janet Campbell was welcomed to her first meeting of the Sponsor Board as the new Delivery Authority HR Director. She introduced the paper on the Skills, Employment & Education Strategy, explaining that, subject to the Board's endorsement, the Programme would begin to recruit interns and apprentices next year.

8.2 The following points were raised and noted:

- 8.2.1 The paper was very comprehensive in its approach to setting out a scalable approach to achieve benefits beyond London by identifying skills gaps and establishing working relationships with charities, colleges, and organisations such as the Prince's Trust and the Job Centre. It was noted that many bodies, such as the National Trust, Heritage Lottery Fund and Historic England had already done work to identify skills gaps. This work would be a source of reference for the Programme.
- 8.2.2 A question of timing was raised about how the Programme intended to initiate apprenticeships now to support the future need. It was explained that a team was working on quantifying the labour demand and skills gaps. The report due for publication in Spring 2021 would combine action plans for each of the project strands to allow specific skills gaps to be identified and addressed.
- 8.2.3 The Programme should be tailoring its procurement processes to be as accessible as possible to enable small businesses to tender for the big project work.
- 8.2.4 The target number of apprenticeships was discussed. The suggested 1 apprentice per £5million spend was benchmarked against the Department for Transport (DfT) who provided for 1 apprentice per £3 to £5million spend. The supply chain would also need to be made aware of the Programme's commitments. It was suggested that the Programme could do better in that social housing enterprises commit to one apprenticeship per £1million spend.
- 8.2.5 It was noted that not all apprenticeships would be in London.
- 8.2.6 Both Mike Brown, Chair, DA and Andy Haynes, Commercial Director, DA were committed to ensuring that the Programme provided apprenticeships and tendering opportunities for people and businesses across the country. They would be invited to brief the Board at a later date.

8.3 **DECISION:** The Board ENDORSED the Skills, Employment and &Education Strategy.



9. Strategic Review

(SB/20/103)

Officials: Sarah Johnson, CEO, Sponsor Body

David Goldstone, CEO, Delivery Authority,

David Yass, Strategic Review Lead, Sponsor Body

- 9.1 The Sponsor Body CEO said that there had been a positive Joint Sponsor Board and Delivery Authority Board member workshop and the final Challenge Group session the week before. The groups had been informed of the proposed phased approach to the works that was intended to minimise the time the Programme required vacant possession of the Palace. It was likely that both short- and long-term decant accommodation would be required to support this.
- 9.2 The draft report was being written and would be available to Board members. The intention was for the report to go to the two House Management Boards in the week commencing 23 November.
- 9.3 It was explained that the Programme needed primary objectives, to help shape a do-minimum option as the basis for the Outline Business Case (OBC), and secondary objectives that would help the team develop a do-maximum approach. Within this framework there would be one, or maximum two, further alternative options scoped out. Options from each of the proposals would then be down selected to provide the final OBC. It was anticipated at this stage, that whatever options were chosen, a partial decant could not be recommended and there would be a period when the Palace would need to be completely emptied.
- 9.4 It was noted that short-term moves might be required if, for example, the disruption from the construction of a cofferdam to facilitate river side access to the site was too significant. The rooms adjacent to the site may need to be taken out of use for the duration of construction.
- 9.5 The Board discussed the potential impact in the reduction in the number of committee rooms. It was explained that there were currently 31 committee rooms on the Parliamentary Estate. If MPs and Peers were decanted into Richmond House and the QEII respectively then the provision would drop to approx. 21 rooms. If a co-location option was chosen for decant, then it was anticipated that there would only be 16 rooms shared between the administrations. There were concerns that reduction would not be compatible with the Statement of Accommodation Requirements (SOAR) and would require further discussion with the Houses before such a compromise could be agreed.
- 9.6 The Board considered that there was a qualitative difference between compromises which would impact on the personal comfort of Members and those which might affect the basic viability for the operation of Parliament. Further consideration needed to be given to the activity of the legislative and select committees.

The Board NOTED the draft recommendations. The Board would be issued with a copy of the full draft report for comment before it was shared with both Houses.

10. Private Session

- 10.1 Members were asked to stay for a private meeting of the Board. All officials, except Sarah Johnson CEO, left the meeting for this discussion.



11. Comments, Announcements and Other Business

11.1 **DECISION:** The Board NOTED the Future agenda (SB/20/098). It was reminded that the January meeting was 4 January 2021 and that papers would go out before Christmas.

11.2 The Chair explained to the Board that it was Michael Torrance, Head of Secretariat's last meeting before he returned to work for the House of Lords. He was thanked for all his time and effort on the Programme.

11.3 Date of the next meeting would be Monday 7 December.

11.4 Close

12. Papers Enclosed for Information

12.1	Quarterly Report Q2 2020 - 2021	(SB/20/099)
12.2	Audit & Assurance Committee Meeting Minutes	(SB/20/100)
12.3	Programme Response to the Public Accounts Committee (PAC) report	(SB/20/101)
12.4	Sponsor Board Meeting Dates	(SB/20/102)

Signed by: 

On: 16 November 2020
