



Meeting Minutes Sponsor Board

Meeting date	18 May 2020
Meeting location	Virtual Meeting
Meeting time	3.30pm – 6.30pm

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

Attendees	Item
John Benger, Clerk of the House of Commons	All
Sarah Johnson, CEO, Sponsor Body	All
Michael Torrance, Head of Secretariat, Sponsor Body	All
Susannah Street, Board Secretary, Sponsor Body	All
Jo Porter, Governance Officer, Sponsor Body	All
Matt White, Programme Director, Delivery Authority	All
David Yass, Strategic Review lead, Sponsor Body	2
Ian Todd, PDA Advisor, Sponsor Body	5
Nicola Sumner, Sharpe Pritchard	5
Mike Brough, Programme & Assurance Director, Sponsor Body	6
James Young, Head of Programme, Risk & Assurance, Sponsor Body	6
Richard Caseby, External Affairs Director, Sponsor Body	7

1. Welcome

- 1.1 The Chair welcomed those present to the third meeting of the substantive Sponsor Board. She thanked the new R&R Digital team for their assistance. She updated the Board on recent discussions that she and the CEO had held with the Leaders and Speakers of both Houses regarding the Strategic Review and Programme funding.
- 1.2 Lord Deighton sent his apologies for the meeting.
- 1.3 No changes were tabled to the Board Meeting agenda and there were no declarations of interests made relevant to the items on the meeting's agenda.
- 1.4 The minutes of the previous meeting (SB/20/031) were AGREED.

2 Sponsor Body Progress Report

(SB/20/032)

Period: April 2020

- 2.1 The Chief Executive Officer gave the Board an overview of the work of the Sponsor Body (SB) for the period. The Strategic Review lead joined the meeting to discuss the Strategic Review.
- 2.2 The following key points were raised and noted:
 - 2.2.1 The strategic risks were about to be reviewed, and changes to the Programme's political environment were likely to emerge as the top risk.
 - 2.2.2 A workstream was underway to provide more up-to-date and comprehensible periodic reports.
 - 2.2.3 The Sponsor Body's work in the past month had been focused on embedding the body's core organisation, systems and processes, the Strategic Review and funding arrangements. A working draft of the plan for the Strategic Review had been shared with the Board. A steering group was being established which would include the CEOs of the SB and Delivery Authority (DA), the Chair of the Sponsor Board, Damian Hinds MP, and the Managing Director of the Parliamentary Security Department. Membership of the challenge panel was under discussion. More resource was being sourced to support the Strategic Review lead, including staff from the SB and DA, to ensure the review could be completed by the autumn. The lead had begun reviewing the strategic decisions previously made in the establishment of the Programme, to examine the provenance and drivers of those decisions and linkages between them, and to assess whether the criteria and inputs used at the time were still appropriate. If circumstances had changed significantly, the review would consider what would now be appropriate; if not, the decisions would not be challenged.
 - 2.2.4 The Board noted that questions about the operation of Parliament, including matters set out in the resolutions of the Houses, were for the Houses and not the Programme to consider but the review could explore the high-level implications of potential changes, leaving it to Parliament to decide whether to instruct the Programme to examine such matters further. However, the review could not go too wide if its work was to be thorough and completed by the

autumn. It would look at risks as well as costs, including information on the costs of an ongoing patch-and-mend approach to maintaining the Palace. The review would not cost the options, but would look at the influence of cost on decision-making. Senior clerks from both Houses would be involved to understand the changes underway in Parliament and the compromises that would be needed to change the parameters significantly.

2.2.5 The Board discussed the revised funding proposal for July 2020 to March 2021. The main changes were in DA funding. In the Sponsor Body, staff numbers had been updated to reflect the revised organisational model, and spending on external relations and communications had been reduced, along with risk and optimism bias allowances. The Business Case team would continue work on solutions that would be needed regardless of the outcome of the Strategic Review, such as for asbestos.

2.2.6 The Programme Director presented the revised funding proposal for the DA, which had been shared with the Board. This took into account the implications of the coronavirus crisis, for example on survey work. Non-critical Digital development had been scaled back, the risk value had been reduced, the development phase had been extended to reflect the Strategic Review and allow Business Case decisions to be taken sequentially, and the recruitment rate had been reduced.

2.3 **DECISION:** The Board NOTED the contents of the report.

3 R&R Programme Progress Report

(SB/20/033)

Period: March 2020

3.1 The Programme Director gave the Board an overview of the work of the DA for the period.

3.2 The following key points were raised and noted:

3.2.1 The options that were currently being examined for the Lords Decant venue were discussed. The key cost driver would be the work done to the building's mechanical and electrical (M&E) systems, and what could be achieved without re-lifting them or having to upgrade them in order to deal with changed demands or to conform with building regulations. It was noted that the building was in public hands but if the Programme re-lifted the M&E, to the long-term benefit of the owners, the spend would be on the Programme's books. However, the current lift and stair provision in the building was not expected to be adequate for use as a Parliamentary building: the do minimum option would explore this further, along with the benefits of completing the works earlier.

3.2.2 The Board noted that further clarification was required regarding the use of the venue after the Programme was completed.

3.3 **DECISION:** The Board NOTED the contents of the report.

4 NEP Progress Report

(SB/20/034)

Period: April 2020

4.1 The report was taken as read. The following key points were raised and noted:

4.1.1 Westminster City Council had postponed their hearing on the NEP planning application.

4.1.2 It was suggested that costs would be rising while works were paused due to the coronavirus crisis, so the cost plan would need to be revisited when the designation of the NEP into the R&R Programme was considered. This would not now happen until after the Strategic Review.

4.2 DECISION: The Board NOTED the contents of the report.

5 Programme Delivery Agreement Approval

(SB/20/035)

5.1 The Board was presented with the final Programme Delivery Agreement (PDA) between the SB and DA for approval. The PDA was a requirement of the Parliamentary Buildings (Restoration and Renewal) Act 2019. The PDA was being considered by both the DA Board and the Sponsor Board on 18 May. It was noted that the Sponsor Board had received a briefing on the draft PDA on 15 May.

5.2 The following key points were raised and noted:

5.2.1 The DA Board had requested that “wellbeing” should be added wherever health and safety was discussed in the PDA. There was no objection from the Sponsor Board.

5.2.2 At the 15 May briefing, the following had been raised:

5.2.2.1 A request for more frequent reporting of anticipated final cost figures;

5.2.2.2 Greater inclusion of heritage and archaeology requirements.

The PDA Advisor informed the Board of the changes made to meet those requests.

5.3 DECISION: The Board APPROVED the PDA as updated in the ways described to the Board at the meeting, and delegated authority to sign the PDA to the CEO on behalf of the Board. The Board noted that the PDA would be circulated to the Board in its final form, and a redacted version was due to be published online.

6 Sponsor Body’s Remitting Approach

(SB/20/036)

6.1 The Board was updated on the approach taken by the Sponsor Body to remit work to the Delivery Authority. Some requirements were set out in the Act, and in due course a set of Sponsor’s Requirements would be agreed. In the interim, task briefs were being agreed for individual projects (the Palace project, the Lords decant project, the heritage collections decant project, and in due course the Commons decant project). This was a collaborative process between the SB and the DA, and established clear baselines for when deliverables would be provided, allowing change control to be formally managed. The cost plans in response to each task brief would be completed by the DA

and were expected to come in within the funding agreed with the Commissions for R&R. The Lords decant project task brief was included in the paper as an example; the heritage collections decant project task brief was near being finalised.

6.2 DECISION: The Board NOTED the contents of the paper.

7 Public Engagement Strategy (SB/20/037)

7.1 The Board was briefed on the proposed strategic approach to public engagement reflecting the requirements set out in the Act.

7.2 The following key points were raised and noted:

- 7.2.1 The strategy's purpose was to set a framework for public engagement to be delivered when the time was right. The announcement of the Strategic Review meant that public engagement activity was likely to commence later in the year.
- 7.2.2 The new website was about to go live, and some social media outputs would be launched in the coming weeks. The roll-out of tracker polling had been postponed due to the coronavirus crisis and Strategic Review. Activities such as deliberative democracy events would be considered in line with the strategy, but not before later in the year.
- 7.2.3 The Board discussed the way in which the political context for public engagement was rapidly changing. It was suggested that the activities suggested in the strategy would be important when the context was more stable, but an additional approach was required for the current phase: it was proposed that the Board should discuss its role in championing the Programme during the current challenges.
- 7.2.4 It was also suggested that research should be undertaken during the period of the Strategic Review to examine the resonance with the public of key messages, including the cost of not proceeding, the importance of democracy and enabling Parliamentary scrutiny, supporting jobs and skills across the UK, and the need to preserve the UK's national heritage. It was proposed that the Programme should also look to learn from research at the National Lottery Heritage Fund and Historic England, as well as using Board members' experience.

7.3 DECISION: The Board CONSIDERED the proposed strategic principles for public engagement presented in the paper. The Board was not asked to approve the strategy: it was noted as work in progress, given the Programme's changing circumstances.

8 Comments, Announcements and Other Business

8.1 There was no other business.

8.2 The date of the next meeting would be Monday 22 June 2020.

8.3 The Chair brought the Board meeting to a close at 17.35.

9 Papers Enclosed for Information

9.1 R&R Quarterly Commissions Report Q4 2019-2020 (SB/20/038)

9.2 Register of Interests Update (SB/20/039)

9.3 Action log (SB/20/040)

9.4 Future Agenda (SB/20/041)

Signed by: 

On: 22 June 2020

Small sections of these minutes have been redacted, usually for reasons such as commercial confidentiality and sensitive management information.