



Minutes Sponsor Board

SB/21/128

Meeting date	1 November 2021
Meeting location	Virtual Meeting
Meeting time	3.30pm – 6.00pm

Attendees

Members Present
Liz Peace, Chair
Baroness Doocey
Kirsty Blackman MP
Lord Best
Lord Carter of Coles
Lord Deighton
Mark Tami MP
Marta Phillips
Paul Lewis
Simon Thurley
Simon Wright
Sir Edward Leigh MP

Attendees	Item
Chris Sexton, Chief of Staff, Sponsor Body	All
Claire Maugham, Communications Director, Sponsor Body	All
Johanna Porter, Board Secretary, Sponsor Body	All
Marianne Cwynarski, Director General (Operations), House of Commons	All
Karen Watling, Executive Assistant, Sponsor Body	All
Sarah Johnson, CEO, Sponsor Body	All
Simon Burton, Clerk of the Parliaments, House of Lords	All
David Goldstone, CEO, Delivery Authority	4,5 & 6
Matt White, Programme Director, Delivery Authority	4,5 & 6
Amanda Colledge, Business Case Director, Sponsor Body	5 & 6

1. Welcome, agenda and declarations of interest

1.1 The Chair opened the meeting. A quorum was present.

1.2 Apologies had been received from John Benger; Marianne Cwynarski attended the meeting as his nominated delegate. Kirsty Blackman had to leave the meeting at 4.00pm to attend the Procedural Committee. She re-joined the meeting at 5.43pm.

1.3 The Chair informed members that Ian Levy MP had stepped down from the Board since his appointment as a Parliamentary Private Secretary for the Cabinet Office. She had thanked Ian for his time and commitment to the Sponsor Board and would keep members updated on his replacement.



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- 1.4 The Board NOTED the meeting agenda (SB/21/113). No amendments were proposed.
- 1.5 The Board NOTED the register of interests (SB/21/114). There were no further declarations of interest made relevant to the items on the agenda, except where previously disclosed.

2. Minutes of the previous meeting and matters arising

- 2.1 **DECISION:** The Board APPROVED the minutes of the meeting held on 4 October 2021 (SB/21/115) as an accurate record of the proceedings. The minutes would be redacted as described, then signed electronically on the Chair's behalf and published on the Programme website.
- 2.2 The Board NOTED the progress against the action log (SB/21/116) since the last meeting. There were no open actions. The Director General asked if there was an action for the Programme to discuss carbon offsetting with Parliament. The Chair said that this would be covered as part of the ongoing discussions about sustainability.

3. Sponsor Body Progress Report

(SB/21/117)

Period: October 2021

Official: Sarah Johnson, CEO, Sponsor Body

- 3.1 The Chief Executive of the Sponsor Body introduced the Sponsor Body Progress Report highlighting the key points:
- 3.1.1 She noted that Parliamentary engagement had commenced, and the team would be moving around key locations within the Estate including Portcullis House and the Royal Gallery.
 - 3.1.2 She thanked Parliamentary colleagues for their input into the 6 Month Plan.
 - 3.1.3 The R&R Steering Group had met twice and was proving to be a positive meeting.
 - 3.1.4 An IPA Gateway-style Review scheduled for late November would review the Programme's approach to the Business Case. The report would be issued to the Chief Executive and reviewed by the Audit & Assurance Committee and the Sponsor Board on completion.
- 3.2 The following points were raised and noted:
- 3.2.1 A high-level assessment of the impact of continued presence on plans for the House of Commons Decant project would be completed by the end of the year. Concern was expressed as to the feasibility of providing a properly quantified business case that was not excessively bound by risk and contingency allowances.
 - 3.2.2 It was requested that the risk reporting more clearly highlighted that some of the risks would remain beyond the control of the Programme as political decisions. The Board were assured that this had been considered in the reporting.



- 3.2.3 Parliament's User Requirements would inform the design baseline. These requirements would continue to iterate until the Programme Business Case deadlines was completed.
- 3.2.4 Members discussed the need for and impact of mechanical ventilation on the provision of office space within the Palace. It was noted that User Requirements would define the extent of mechanical ventilation to be provided.
- 3.2.5 The Board was concerned that welfare arrangements for the intrusive survey programme had still not been resolved. It was noted that the issue had now been escalated to the R&R Steering Group for resolution.
- 3.2.6 It was anticipated that, subject to the Programme Business Case being approved in 2023, Parliament would begin to see an increased presence from R&R teams from around 2025, although any decant would not be likely to commence until around 2027. The formal schedule for the works, including decant dates, would be confirmed in the Programme Business Case.

3.3 **DECISION:** The Board NOTED the Sponsor Body Progress Report for October 2021.

4. DA Programme Report

Period: September 2021

(SB/21/118)

Officials: David Goldstone, CEO, Delivery Authority

Matt White, Programme Director, Delivery Authority

- 4.1 The Chair said that she would be asking the Chief Executive (CEO) of the Delivery Authority (DA) to provide clarity about how money was being spent. He explained that the Business Plan, which the Sponsor Board would be reviewing shortly, would clearly articulate Programme spend and what would be delivered for the cost. He acknowledged that the accuracy of forecasting needed to be improved; and whilst spend had been lower than forecast, there had also been some real savings.
- 4.2 The Programme Director reported that the Heritage Roadmap had been well received at the R&R Steering Group. The work would be extended to consider the schedule implication of three different delivery options: a new build facility aligned to a long-term vision, a partnership model, and a short-term option. It was noted that the decant of the archives remained separate to the other heritage items in the Palace.
- 4.3 The following points were raised and noted:
 - 4.3.1 Members discussed the options that were being considered for mechanically ventilating the Palace, particularly whether an option for not providing such ventilation was being considered. The Programme Director said that the DA were working to the options outlined in the paper presented to the Board in March 2021, Business Case Strategy: Update & Scope of Scheme Options for the Business Case (SB/21/022) all of which provided for fresh air mechanical ventilation, not air-conditioning, in the Palace.



- 4.3.2 The CEO of the DA said that the objectives set in March 2021 following the publication of the Strategic Review indicated that the required levels of ventilation could not be met through natural ventilation alone. It was also noted that currently in some locations it was either not physically possible to open windows or doing so presented a security threat.
- 4.3.3 The Chair suggested the level of proposed ventilation should be revisited as members were expressing strong views on the need for mechanical ventilation in office space and committee rooms. It was noted that the necessary plant would take up significant space in the Palace and would be complex to install. Its provision would have an impact on budget and delivery timescales; a 20% reduction in provision would have a significant impact on the programme and budget. The DA CEO noted that this topic had been raised by the DA Board in recent months and the DA Board would be considering this important topic again at the next few board meetings.
- 4.3.4 The Chief of Staff said that it was important for the user requirements to capture the client's need for ventilation in the Palace. He said that he would raise the issue with the R&R Directors at their next meeting on User Requirements.
- 4.3.5 The Board asked the DA not to lose sight of design issues that had previously proved controversial, for example the removal of the terrace pavilions, and amendments to the security and catering facilities. The CEO of the Sponsor Body reported that these issues would be addressed during the current round of member engagement with feedback informing the design baseline. It was anticipated that the Parliamentary User Requirements would also provide clarity.

4.4 **DECISION:** The Board NOTED the DA programme report (executive summary) for September 2021.

5. Continued Presence

(SB/21/119)

Officials: David Goldstone, CEO, Delivery Authority

Matt White, Programme Director, Delivery Authority

5.1 The CEO for the DA updated the Board on the progress of the continued presence study. He assured members that the DA was being objective in its approach. He reported that the DA had come up with a proposed approach to deliver a Continued Presence that broadly met the requirements set out by the House of Commons Commission. The team was now looking at deliverability options, and the report on findings was on track to be delivered when planned.

5.2 The following points were raised and noted:

- 5.2.1 Concern was expressed as to whether the Programme would receive the information needed from Parliamentary officials to complete the continued presence analysis. It



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was reported that colleagues were working to obtain the information required, and it was not anticipated that the delay would impact on the proposed reporting timeline.

- 5.2.2 The CEO of the Sponsor Body confirmed that Scenario 1 assumed the transfer of MPs from the House of Commons Chamber to the House of Lords Chamber for a period to allow works to the House of Commons Chamber to be completed.
- 5.2.3 The Programme Director advised the Board that Scenario 2 would require an extended recess period every summer for the duration of the works. Notwithstanding this, the refurbishment of the House of Commons Chamber could not be completed in a single three-month recess.
- 5.2.4 The CEO of the DA said that the next report to the Board would include more details of the anticipated time and costs of a continued presence. The report would include details of the costs associated with remodelling Richmond House and/or building a temporary chamber for the House of Commons if a continued presence was not required, as well as the relative saving if a continued presence was adopted and a temporary chamber was not required. The Chair reminded the Board that the previous plans for Richmond House were not being progressed, but it was likely, whichever option was agreed, that the building would still be required for some aspects of the decant process.
- 5.2.5 It was confirmed that the figures would consider inflation, which it was noted would have a significant impact on overall cost. The HM Treasury's Green Book did not define how the inflationary costs should be forecast, although some guidance was provided.
- 5.2.6 Concern was expressed about the practical safety of moving members, staff, and visitors through the centre of a building site; and how this could be coordinated with the extensive temporary plant provisions required. It was noted that the impact on other Parliamentary business would be extensive and prolonged, and the impact of the noise and disruption should not be underestimated by Parliament.
- 5.2.7 It was suggested that a hybrid working arrangement for the House of Commons could greatly reduce the number of people in the Palace; and that a stripped back version of the Essential Functions, as specified by Mr Speaker, should be considered.
- 5.2.8 It was confirmed that the study had so far only considered solutions that met the Essential and Highly Desirable Functions as directed by Mr Speaker's letter (26 April 2021). The Programme would need further instruction from Parliament to consider alternative proposals. Concern was expressed that further instruction would add delay to the Programme timeline. It was also noted that Programme funding had only been allocated for the Continued Presence work on the basis of the requirements set by the Speaker and any additional work would require that the funding proposals be adjusted accordingly.



5.3 **DECISION:** The Board NOTED the interim update on the continued presence study by the R&R Programme.

6. Business Case: House of Lords Decant Project Update

(SB/21/120)

Official: Amanda Colledge, Business Case Director, Sponsor Body

6.1 The Business Case Director highlighted the key points from the report and thanked Parliamentary colleagues for their input. She said that the House of Lords Commission was due to be updated on the House of Lords Decant project in December.

6.2 The following points were raised and noted:

6.2.1 It was confirmed that the figures provided in the paper included design fees, but not Programme overhead costs. Members were assured that the final paper would provide detail on the breakdown of the costs. It was estimated at this point that around a third of the project costs would be attributable to the replacement of end-of-life M&E in the QEII.

6.2.2 A query was raised on the validity of the indicative cost range provided. The Board were assured that the Programme had been learning from previous projects and was committed to delivering the work within the defined parameters once agreed.

6.2.3 The Board would be asked to take an in-principle decision on the preferred option in February, prior to engagement with the Lords governance bodies, after which the Board would be asked to make a final decision. At the point the Board was asked to make this in principle decision it would be able to take it in the context of understanding the impact of a continued presence approach on the overall programme schedule and the length of time that the Lords would be required to spend outside the Palace.

6.3 **DECISION:** The Board NOTED the update on the House of Lords Decant Project.

7. Comments, announcements, and other business

7.1 The Board NOTED the Future agenda (SB/21/121).

7.2 The Board Secretary informed the Board that, subject to the agreement of the Parliamentary Digital Service (PDS), it was proposed that members would be provided with a software tool called 'Board Papers' that would help them better access their papers. This application would allow members to view, download, annotate and print papers from their preferred device. The application would be demonstrated to members at the December meeting and rolled out, with full training provided, in time for the January meeting. The DA Board were already using the tool and members had provided positive feedback as to their user experience.



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7.3 The CEO of the Sponsor Board informed the Board that the NAO would be carrying out an update to their previous report on the Programme; the fieldwork for the report was planned to be completed before Christmas and the report published early in the new year.

7.4 The date of the next meeting would be Monday 6 December 2021.

7.5 The Chair brought the meeting to a close at 18.17pm

8. Papers enclosed for information

8.1 Communications Evaluation: September 2021	(SB/21/122)
8.2 R&R Programme Narrative	(SB/21/123)
8.3 R&R Timescales Narrative	(SB/21/124)
8.4 Decarbonisation of the Grid	(SB/21/125)
8.5 Audit & Assurance Committee Minutes	(SB/21/126)
8.6 Joint Audit Committee Minutes	(SB/21/127)

Signed by:

Date: 6 December 2021
