



# The Tebbit Review of Management and Services of the House of Commons

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On 25 June 2007, the *Review of Management and Services of the House of Commons*, conducted by Sir Kevin Tebbit, was published. The Review was the third review of management and services of the House of Commons, following the Ibbs Review (1990) and the Braithwaite Review (1999).

In its summary, the Tebbit Review was described as follows:

... the report is concerned with the more prosaic issue of how the services to support the institution of the House of Commons and Members of Parliament are governed, managed and delivered – vital in itself, given the importance of a well-functioning Parliament in the affairs of the nation, but not about constitutional policy prescriptions.

This note looks at the detailed recommendations of the Tebbit Review in the House of Commons, the response by the House of Commons Commission and subsequent implementation. There is also background on how the Administration of the House has changed since 1978 and some comparative information on the devolved parliamentary administrations.

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## A. Introduction

A review of the management and services of the House of Commons undertaken by Sir Kevin Tebbit was published on 25 June 2007. Subsequent implementation of its recommendations by the House of Commons Commission has led to a reorganisation of the governance and management of the Commons Service. A new structure for the House departments came into being on 1 January 2008.

## B. Implementing the Tebbit Review

The House of Commons Commission discussed the Review with Sir Kevin prior to its publication, at its meeting on 18 June 2007:

The Commission considered Sir Kevin Tebbit's report on the management and services of the House and discussed it with him. The Commission thanked Sir Kevin and his team and agreed:

- To publish the report as HC Paper 685 on Monday 25 June
- To seek a debate on the report in Westminster Hall after the summer recess (with the debate on the Commission's annual report)
- To ask the Finance & Services and Administration Committees to consider the report and comment on it
- To invite the Board of Management to consider the report and prepare a programme for taking forward its proposals, subject to points made by Members in the debate
- To consider the report again and decide upon its recommendations in the autumn after views from Members of the House and the House administration have been made known.<sup>1</sup>

On 24 July Nick Harvey announced on behalf of the Commission that several aspects of the recommendations would be fast-tracked, including the amalgamation of Estates and Works; the expansion of the Office of the Clerk into that of the Chief Executive and the reorganisation of the Board of Management on functional lines.<sup>2</sup> The Clerk of the House was asked to present proposals for implementation in regular progress reports. In March 2007 the Commission had already agreed to implement a re-organisation of the Estate and Works Services areas along the lines proposed in the emerging findings of the Tebbit review.<sup>3</sup>

The annual Commons debate on the Commission annual report on 18 October 2007 offered Members an opportunity for more detailed debate on the implementation of Tebbit.<sup>4</sup> The Commission also took views from the Administration, Audit and Finance & Services Committees and the Board of Management. Following progress reports from the Clerk, the

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<sup>1</sup> House of Commons Commission, *Formal Minutes – 18 June 2007*, [http://www.parliament.uk/about\\_commons/house\\_of\\_commons\\_commission/\\_hccfm180607.cfm](http://www.parliament.uk/about_commons/house_of_commons_commission/_hccfm180607.cfm)

<sup>2</sup> HC Deb 24 July 2008 c916w

<sup>3</sup> House of Commons Commission Minutes 12 March 2007 at [http://www.parliament.uk/about\\_commons/house\\_of\\_commons\\_commission/\\_hccfm120307.cfm](http://www.parliament.uk/about_commons/house_of_commons_commission/_hccfm120307.cfm)

<sup>4</sup> HC Deb, 18 October 2007, c317-48WH

Commission, on 8 October, approved a reorganisation of the Board of Management on functional lines and strengthening the Office of the Chief Executive.<sup>5</sup> The following meeting of the Commission (22 October) agreed to the creation of four new departments into which the existing six departments of the House other than PICT would be merged and approved an Instrument of Delegation to give effect to these changes as part of the creation of a more unified House Service.

The four new departments are as follows:

- **Chamber and Committee Services** – to provide advisory and other services that support the work of the Chamber and Committees. This consists of the former Clerks Department (except POST), the former Department of the Official Report and parts of the old Serjeant at Arms Department – including the post of Serjeant and responsibility for security and ceremonial.
- **Information Services** – to inform the work of the House and its Members, and to provide information and access to the public. This consists of the former Department of the Library together with a number of other related functions such as POST, visitor services and the Curators Office (both formerly in the Serjeant's Department), and the Web Centre (previously in PICT).
- **Resources** – to provide HR and finance support to the House Service and to administer Members' pay, pensions and allowances. This is broadly the former Department of Finance and Administration.
- **Facilities** – to provide the accommodation, catering and other facilities required by the House and to maintain the fabric of the buildings. This consists of the former Refreshment Department and functions of the old Serjeant at Arms Department, including the Estates and Works directorates, accommodation and office services.

Further details on the change to the new departments are spotlighted in a document produced by the change team and available on the intranet.<sup>6</sup> Outlines of the new departments are provided as organograms in Section G of this note.

The new Management Board now consists of the Director Generals of each of these departments, plus the Clerk as Chief Executive and up to two external members. The first external member is currently Joan Miller, head of PICT – PICT ceases to be a department of the House on 1 April 2008 when it is vested as a joint department of both Houses under the Parliament (Joint Departments) Act 2007. A recruitment process for another external member is underway. Full details are on the webpage for the Board.<sup>7</sup> The instrument of delegation made on 22 October 2007 states:

**Membership** The membership of the Management Board shall be the Clerk of the House of Commons as chief executive of the House Service (who shall be Chairman), the Director General of Committee and Chamber Services, the Director General of Facilities, the Director General of Information Services, and the Director General of Resources. The Board is authorised to appoint up to two external, non-executive advisors. In the event that there is a decision related to a delegated function that is not reached by consensus, the external advisors shall not exercise a vote.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> House of Commons Commission, *Formal Minutes – 8 October 2007*,

[http://www.parliament.uk/about\\_commons/house\\_of\\_commons\\_commission\\_/hccfm081007.cfm](http://www.parliament.uk/about_commons/house_of_commons_commission_/hccfm081007.cfm)

<sup>6</sup> <http://pdvnsco.parliament.uk/bb/offclerk/Management%20Structure%20Explanatory%20Notes.doc>

<sup>7</sup> <http://pdvnsco.parliament.uk/bb/corporate/Management%20Board.htm>

<sup>8</sup> <http://pdvnsco.parliament.uk/bb/corporate/Instrument%20of%20Delegation%20-%20Management%20Board.htm>

The Commission's formal response published in December 2007 gave details:

Since then the Commission has approved the composition of the new Management Board, organised on functional lines, and the creation of four new departments of the House—Chamber and Committee Services; Information Services; Resources; and Facilities—into which the existing departments will be merged. A new Instrument of Delegation giving effect to these changes to the House of Commons service was approved on 22 October 2007.<sup>9</sup>

The full response from the Commission on the management board is reproduced below:

### **Management Board**

#### *Recommendation 18*

*The changes to the composition of the Management Board should be made soon, but with appropriate action taken to ensure that it is not perceived as downgrading the importance of the services provided by those no longer 'on the Board' or their Departments. (Paragraph 112)*

#### *Recommendation 19*

*A more strategic Management Board with a slimmed-down executive membership should be created, to comprise: the Clerk of the House/Chief Executive; Deputy Clerk/Chief Operating Officer; Serjeant at Arms/Director of Facilities and Support; Librarian/Director of Information and Communications; Director of Finance and Administration; and Director of Human Resources. (Paragraph 113)*

#### *Recommendation 20*

*Two external advisers (non-executive directors) should be appointed to the Management Board, in the expectation that this will prove as successful as it has in Government Departments, in supporting the role of the Chief Executive, as well as in helping the Management Board more generally. (Paragraph 116)*

#### *Recommendation 21*

*Individual Heads of Department should have responsibility for delivering agreed crosscutting objectives or processes on behalf of the Management Board as a whole, acting as senior responsible owners or process owners, on the basis of wide powers granted by the Management Board. (Paragraph 118)*

Recommendations 18–21 have been accepted in principle. In October 2007 the Commission agreed, with immediate effect, to establish a new Management Board to replace the existing Board of Management. This consists of the Clerk of the House, as Chief Executive and Chairman, four directors general with functional responsibilities and up to two external advisors. The Director of PICT will also attend the Board with executive responsibility for PICT. This latter arrangement will be reviewed in 2009/10.

The Commission also agreed that the six House departments other than PICT should be merged into four new departments broadly aligned with the responsibilities of the Directors General. These will be:

- Chamber and Committee Services—to provide advisory and other services that support the work of the Chamber and Committees (including security and ceremonial).

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<sup>9</sup> HC 193 2007-8 <http://www.parliament.uk/documents/upload/tebbit-response-071219.pdf>

- Information Services—to inform the work of the House and its Members, and to provide information and access to the public.
- Resources—to provide HR and finance support to the House Service and to administer Members' pay, pensions and allowances.
- Facilities—to provide the accommodation, catering and other facilities required by the House and to maintain the fabric of the buildings.

The aim of the Commission and the Board is to create a fully unified House Service that will provide Members and others with the highest standards of service. Although the full change process will take some time to complete, the new Departments will come into existence on 1 January 2008.

Further details of the response to the recommendations of the Review, published on 19 December 2007, are outlined in Section C of this note.

## **C. The Tebbit Review – the detail**

As foreshadowed in the 2005 debate on the House of Commons Commission's annual report for 2004/05, a review of the implementation of the Braithwaite Report was announced by the Commission on the same day as the debate on its 2005/06 report – 19 October 2006. The Commission appointed Sir Kevin Tebbit, a former Permanent Secretary at the Ministry of Defence, to conduct the review. He was given the following terms of reference:

To review the implementation of the recommendations of the report of Mr Michael Braithwaite Report (HC 745, 1998-99) on the management and services of the House of Commons and his subsequent report on the Serjeant at Arms' Department, and in particular to assess:

- whether the expected benefits have been realised;
- what further actions are required for the House Service to achieve the objectives laid down in the Outline Strategic Plan for the House of Commons Administration 2006-11;
- whether, in particular, the organisational and staffing arrangements currently in place are adequate to realise the objectives laid down in the Resolutions of the House of 26 January 2005 relating to Connecting Parliament with the Public.<sup>10</sup>

In the summary of his report, Sir Kevin set out the objective of his report:

Our objective has been to respect the status and character of the House and preserve the special qualities of the House Service, while seeking to build organisational and executive capacity and promote effectiveness, accountability and value for money.<sup>11</sup>

Following a brief introduction, Sir Kevin addressed five main issues:

- Governance and Management;
- Finance and Resources;

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<sup>10</sup> HC Deb 19 October 2006 c1359W

<sup>11</sup> *Review of Management and Services of the House of Commons*, 25 June 2007, HC 685, p3

- Estates and Works;
- Connecting Parliament with the Public; and
- Services to Members.

These issues are reviewed in the following sections.

## 1. Governance and Management

Sir Kevin drew attention to the “self-governing” nature of the House of Commons. He did not question the principle of self-governance. He commented that “A self-governing House of Commons does not mean that Members should try to run it themselves”.<sup>12</sup> He also argued that it was important to “get it right”:

... it is particularly important to get it right, because of the distinctive way in which the Commons runs itself: it is a system of self-governance, by Members, for Members. Freedom from outside interference reflects the unique position and need of Parliament to exercise control over all the resources necessary to achieve its purpose, in accordance with the constitutional principle of independence from the Executive.<sup>13</sup>

He said that the structure and system that had evolved in the Commons struck the balance between the freedom implied by self-governance and the obligations and responsibilities imposed by it. Three main bodies of Members – the Commission, the Finance and Services Committee and the Administration – provided that governance in directing, supervising and drawing on the services provided by the officials of the House Service.<sup>14</sup>

After reviewing and assessing the “Braithwaite prescription” for the improvement of the governance and management structure, Sir Kevin concluded that:

- “The Commission remains largely invisible in the eyes of most Members and is not seen as giving a clear lead”.
- “the Finance and Services Committee does not provide as full an underpinning of the Commission as was envisaged”.
- Chairmanship of the Audit Committee by a member of the Commission “is not fully consistent with the principle of external scrutiny”.
- The Administration Committee, which replaced individual Domestic Committees in 2005, has led to “a loss of detailed engagement ... in the work of individual House departments”. At the same time its Members feel their views “are not sufficiently heeded”.
- Close co-ordination and co-operation between the Administration Committee, the Finance and Services Committee and the Board of Management, envisaged by Braithwaite, was not taking place.
- “The executive body in the governance structure — Clerk of the House/Chief Executive, Board of Management, Departments — has clearly moved in the direction recommended by Braithwaite. But there is a sense, not least among several senior officials themselves, that the transition to a more professionally managed and

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<sup>12</sup> *Ibid*, p4

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid*, para 5

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid*, para 9

integrated House Service has been slower than expected and needs reinforcement".<sup>15</sup>

With those conclusions in mind, he considered whether further management change and the application of modern management techniques were appropriate in the House of Commons, given that the current federal system was working well in some areas; that the improvements needed could be achieved through the present arrangements; that there was a view that the highly political environment did not lend itself to the application of such techniques; and that the House had experienced less external pressure for change and efficiency saving than Government Departments. He also noted that if change was to succeed, the need for it would have to be recognised and that there would have to be "determination to implement recommendations wholeheartedly". He also believed that:

... there is general support for a more corporate and business-like approach to the way the House Service is run; that services at present delivered effectively to Parliament should also be performed as efficiently as possible; and that the House also needs the flexibility to move resources around the system — human as well as financial — to meet future challenges.

69. The rationale for doing so is **axed** on three 'R's—

- the Reputation of the House of Commons as a self-governing institution, able to withstand detailed scrutiny of its governance and management;
- Responsiveness to the needs of Members and others for services of a quality that meet recognised standards of best practice;
- Resource considerations and the need to ensure that the budget available is used rigorously in support of the House's defined objectives and priorities, as distinct from the preferences of individual Departments.<sup>16</sup>

Against this background, he recommended that the **Audit Committee** should be chaired by a suitably qualified external member; and that a member of the Finance and Services Committee should serve on the Audit Committee, as well as an additional external member. (The current practice is for the Audit Committee to be chaired by the Shadow Leader of the House, who is also a member of the Commission. An external chair of the Audit Committee would not be able to sit on the Commission).

He recommended that the **Finance and Services Committee** should take on more supervisory roles from the Commission; scrutinise proposals made by Members or House officials before they are considered by the Commission; and have as a member the Chairman of Ways and Means, the implication being that the Chairman would take the chair of Finance and Services.

Individual Members on the **Administration Committee** should track particular services on behalf of the Committee.

Both the **Administration Committee** and the **Finance and Services Committee** should be smaller.

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<sup>15</sup> *Ibid*, paras 51-61

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid*, paras 63-69



The **Clerk of the House** should continue to perform the dual role of Clerk of the House and Chief Executive. Succession planning should address the need for potential Clerks of the House to gain senior management experience. In future, the Clerk of the House should be appointed by means of open competition. The Clerk of the House should set annual objectives and targets, budget allocations and the framework for delivery for all House departments.

The Office of the Chief Executive should be expanded. It should undertake planning and performance management functions, and co-ordinate communications.<sup>17</sup>

Sir Kevin concluded that “the House Service would benefit from a more developed performance management system, to improve its collective ability to track performance against main objectives, priorities and targets”. He considered that “the definition of what successful performance would look like, and how progress toward it can be measured convincingly, remains elusive”.

He recommended that a performance management system based on the Balanced Scorecard, and with clear criteria for achieving success, should be adopted. One of the success criteria should be improved Members’ satisfaction with services – and this should be assessed by regular ‘rolling’ surveys. The performance management system “should be underpinned by an activity and functional costing system, together with benchmarking against ‘peer’ organisations and areas”.<sup>18</sup>

Sir Kevin argued that the current structure of the Board of Management, which ensures that each Department is represented, encouraged members to represent their own departments, rather than provide corporate management. He proposed replacing the Board of Management with a **Management Board**. It would have a smaller membership; the Official Report, Refreshment Department and PICT would no longer be directly represented on the Board. In their place he proposed the addition of a new Director of Human Resources (separate from the Director of Finance and Administration) and two “non-executive directors”. He suggested that this change in structures would give Management Board members greater authority in managing “cross-cutting” business.<sup>19</sup>

### **Response from the Commission**

The Commission did not accept the recommendation for an external chair for the Audit Committee. Such a chair would not offer direct linkage between the two Audit Committees and their two parent bodies, the Commission and the Members Estimate Committee (MEC). The audit committee of the Members Estimate Committee could not be chaired by an external member, without a specific decision of the House and the Commission considered that audit arrangements were working effectively. Nor did the Commission agree that the NAO should institute value for money audits, preferring the House’s Internal Review Service. Recommendations to strengthen the role of the Finance and Services Committee were accepted, but while the Commission considered that the Chairman of Ways and Means should join the committee they thought that eventual chairmanship of the committee would ‘add unduly to the burdens of that office’.

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<sup>17</sup> *Ibid*, paras 71-99

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid*, paras 100-107

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid*, paras 108-119

The Commission indicated that the **Administration Committee** would reconsider its decision that individual members would not track particular services but the Commission report noted that both the **Administration Committee** and the **Finance and Services Committee** rejected recommendations that they should be smaller in size, as this would remove the representation of smaller parties.

It was agreed that the **Clerk of the House** should continue to perform the dual role of Clerk of the House and Chief Executive and that succession planning should address the need for potential Clerks of the House to gain senior management experience but the Commission response noted without commitment the recommendation for open competitions for future Clerks of the House.

While it was accepted in principle that the Clerk of the House should delegate annual objectives and targets, budget allocations and the framework for delivery for all House departments, the Management Board indicated that this should be achieved through a new more integrated business planning system reflecting the unified nature of the new House service.

The Office of the Chief Executive has been expanded by the Commission, as a fast-tracked decision, to undertake planning and performance management functions, and co-ordinate communications. A new upgraded Head of Office has been appointed and its communications functions expanded

The Commission agreed to work towards a performance management system based on the Balanced Scorecard and with clear criteria for achieving success. It also agreed that there should be improved Members' satisfaction with services as assessed by regular 'rolling' surveys and that the performance management system "should be underpinned by an activity and functional costing system, together with benchmarking against 'peer' organisations and areas".

A new Management Board has been created with a smaller membership, as noted above and the Official Report and the catering services are no longer directly represented. The structures of the four new departments are outlined in Part F of this note.

## **2. Finance and Resources**

120. Braithwaite recommended that financial disciplines and processes should be strengthened across the House Service and that better financial data should be generated to underpin the introduction of a performance management system. He also recommended a more corporate approach to finance (and HR) services in the interests of efficiency.

121. Much has been done since then to improve matters. ...

Sir Kevin concluded that a modern financial system was in place. However, there were still some problems: the ability of departments to operate the system was still variable; the system was more costly and cumbersome than necessary; and there was a general concern

about the management of capital expenditure, project work and contracts. But he observed that “These areas should improve as action in hand takes effect and experience grows in operating the system”.<sup>20</sup>

He continued that “The main challenge now is to use the financial information being generated from the HAIS [House Administrative Information System] process to inform management decisions on services and delivery”. He welcomed the power this would give the House to support strategic and corporate management, and to conduct benchmarking exercises. Having already recommended that the Office of the Chief Executive should have responsibility for the performance management system, he recommended that the Department of Finance and Administration (DFA) should be strengthened by the appointment of a management accountant; that the Director of Finance and Administration should have more control over finance staff in departments; and, in turn, they should have a reporting line to the DFA.<sup>21</sup>

He noted that, whilst the Board of Management aimed to keep spending on core services over the period to 2011 at 2006/07 levels (adjusted for inflation), the House had not been subjected to the same financial disciplines as Whitehall departments. He recommended that each House Department should present plans to the Finance and Services Committee “on the basis of alternative funding assumptions, to inform decisions on future financial allocations”. He suggested that budget holders could present their proposals on the basis of three separate assumptions: -5%, 0% and +5%. He also called for a change in the emphasis in improving the House’s procurement activity by building on the expertise of contracts managers in the departments.<sup>22</sup>

Sir Kevin noted that human resources (HR) were managed in accordance with the delegated structure of the House Service. There were advantages to this approach because HR staff knew departmental business well and the departments had particular staffing requirements. However, he observed inconsistency of practice (including locally developed terms and conditions); varying degrees of professionalism; difficulties in managing careers beyond departmental confines; and costs – in the House the HR officers:staff ratio was 1:30 compared to a target of 1:90 in most organisations. Despite these observations, he was reluctant to recommend changes as the current system had only recently been put in place: “Nevertheless our review suggests that there is a strong case for looking at this again”. He suggested “pushing” more HR functions down to line managers and staff and up to “a stronger central HR division” to reduce the amount of HR work done in departments. He argued that such an approach would have three effects. It would:

- produce greater managerial competences across the House of Commons;
- provide the corporate ‘glue’ of shared goals and values “so that staff work more effectively towards achieving common ends”; and
- help to address the need for greater flexibility across Departmental boundaries to cope with changes in House priorities and objectives.

He recommended that the federal structure that applied to HR functions should be reconsidered; and that central HR should administer a scheme to identify and develop

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<sup>20</sup> *Ibid*, paras 120-125

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid*, paras 126-133

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid*, paras 134-138; 140-146

internal talent. He also reiterated the recommendation for a Director of HR to sit on the Management Board, adding that the Director should be professionally qualified.<sup>23</sup>

### **Response from the Commission**

The recommendation to add a management accountant to the Department of Resources was accepted and the Commission agreed to a review by the Director General of Resources of the organisation of finance and procurement. There was also a commitment in principle from the Management Board for each House Department to present plans to the Finance and Services Committee “on the basis of alternative funding assumptions, to inform decisions on future financial allocations”.

The Commission accepted the fundamentals of Sir Kevin’s recommendations about the HR function in the House and the Director General of Resources has begun a review of the federal structure of HR functions and is bringing forward proposals for central HR to administer a scheme to identify and develop senior managerial talent in the House. The need to train and recruit project managers was accepted in respect of estates and works.

### **3. Estates and Works**

Sir Kevin found that the organization put in place to manage the Estates and Works functions, following the Braithwaite report, “had not proved satisfactory”. Because of this and because of the importance of the issue in budgetary and operational terms; and because the House had already recognized the needs for improvements, Sir Kevin submitted emerging findings on estates and works to the Commission, in March 2007.

Braithwaite 2 (a follow-up to the main Braithwaite Report) had recommended a strengthened role for the Serjeant at Arms and Black Rod as budget holders for the works programme; a separation of the ‘client’ and ‘provider’ functions in accordance with established models of good practice; and the creation of departmental finance office. Although the roles of the Serjeant and Black Rod were strengthened, “the ability to discharge those authorities was not provided for”. There also appeared to have been “a crucial disagreement over detailed allocation of roles and responsibilities as between Estates and Works”. Sir Kevin noted that the shortcomings he identified were validated by detailed work being carried for the Estate Board. He recommended that the Estates and Works Services directorate should be reintegrated under one Director. He also recommended that a Programme Office should be set up: its programme should be determined in the light of the review for the Estate Board; and he made a number of other recommendations on budgeting and human resources.<sup>24</sup>

### **Response from the Commission**

The Commission accepted the recommendation that the Estates and Works Directorates be re-integrated under one Director-General. The new Department of Facilities is outlined in Section F and the Director General and a new Parliamentary Director of Estates have been appointed.

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<sup>23</sup> *Ibid*, paras 147-157

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid*, paras 158-169

The Department of Resources will include a planning and programming function, the head of which will report directly to the Director General.

#### **4. “Connecting Parliament with the Public”**

The Review’s terms of reference required it to pay particular attention to the Modernisation Committee’s report *Connecting Parliament with the Public*.

After reviewing the progress that had been made in implementing the Modernisation Committee’s recommendations, Sir Kevin recommended that the House should endorse the Administration Committee’s proposals for a dedicated space for learning – which the House did on 12 June 2007.<sup>25</sup>

Within this section of his report, he also made the following recommendations:

We recommend that the Parliamentary website and the internet generally should be regarded as a key element in fostering close connections between Parliament and the public, and crucially the younger generation, and should be developed and funded accordingly as a priority [para 196].

We recommend that the Group on Information for the Public should remain the official-led organisation responsible for developing policy and programmes in this area, but should be given a stronger executive role under the chairmanship of the Director of Information and Communications, mandated by the Management Boards of both Houses and allocated a budget for this purpose [para 202].

We recommend that the House Service should actively support Members in making best use of the Communications Allowance, facilitating where possible savings in joint procurement of capital equipment and top-of-the-line software for publishing hard copy newsletters as well as the design of modern interactive websites [para 206].<sup>26</sup>

#### **Response from the Commission**

There was a general acceptance of the importance of developing the website, and a commitment to providing the necessary funding to achieve this. The Commission did not promise funding for the Group for Information to the Public but indicated that the re-alignment of the departments effectively put the majority of GIP functions under the budgetary control of the Director General of Information Services.

The recommendations on supporting Members to make the best use of the Communications allowance by MPs through joint procurement was noted, and it was indicated that the recommendation would be taken into account when the allowance was reviewed by the Members’ Estimate Committee.

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<sup>25</sup> The House resolved:

That this House approves the First Report of the Administration Committee, on Improving Facilities for Educational Visitors to Parliament (House of Commons Paper No. 434); and endorses the Committee’s proposals, including a dedicated space for educational visitors to be provided on or off the Estate complemented by engagement with those who do not visit Westminster. [HC Deb 12 June 2007 c720]

<sup>26</sup> *Review of Management and Services of the House of Commons*, 25 June 2007, HC 685, paras 171-206

## 5. Services to Members

Sir Kevin reviewed the provision of services to Members by each of the House's departments and addressed specific recommendations to each of the departments. Briefly, he recommended for the Clerk's Department:

- re-organising the senior structure of the Clerk's Department,
- closer cooperation between the Library and Clerk's Department in support of select committees,
- a greater emphasis on proactive services.

For the Library:

- continuing to shift resources towards areas where demand is growing,
- considering more joint working with the House of Lords Library.

Other recommendations were that:

- the Official Report (Hansard) should review the means by which Members can review their text before publication.
- the Serjeant at Arms Department should establish a client relations group to provide a more responsive service for Members.
- the Department of Finance and Administration should provide improved on-line information about allowances and expenditure. Other recommendations for DFA in relation to HR and finance are discussed under Part A:2 of this Note.
- the Refreshment Department should rigorously benchmark its catering services, but the option of outsourcing was not recommended.
- for PICT, an external health check for Parliamentary IT plans and delivery should be arranged, to be carried out by the Cabinet Office Independent Reviewer and Central Sponsor for Information Assurance.

Building on the use the Review made of the Members' Survey of Services and of individual Member interviews,<sup>27</sup> Sir Kevin also considered the services provided by the House to Members' staff and recommended that the regular surveys of Members' satisfaction should seek the views of Members' staff.<sup>28</sup>

### Response from the Commission

The Commission agreed that the management of the Clerk's department, now the Department of Chamber and Committee Services, should be delegated to the Clerk Assistant and that the Departments of Chamber and Committee Services and Information Services would develop a new staffing model for the researchers and policy analysts which would offer a better and more flexible service to individual MPs and committees.

It was agreed that the House should be more proactive in developing services, that the Libraries of both Houses should work more closely on issues of common interest, that Members should receive their speeches electronically to check pre-publication of Hansard, that the Department of Facilities should develop a one-stop shop; finally, that better information would be available to Members, online, about their allowances.

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<sup>27</sup> Listed in Annex 10

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid*, paras 207-264

The Commission also indicated that both catering and IT services would be subject to benchmarking as well as general surveys of Member satisfaction indicated previously.

## **6. Other issues**

This section covers the chapters in the Tebbit Review entitled “Working with the House of Lords”, “Grants to Inter-parliamentary Associations”, and “Implementation”.

### Working with the House of Lords

Sir Kevin acknowledged “the constitutional necessity to keep the work of the Houses formally distinct from each other”. But he noted that combined working with the House of Lords does occur; that a joint department for both Houses (PICT) was in the process of being established; and that there were examples of informal co-operation between the two Houses. He concluded that “there would be further mutual benefit, in terms of economies of scale, together with increased flexibility and opportunities for staff development, were more joint services to be established” and he recommended that “the possibility of providing more services jointly with the House of Lords should be explored, in the interests of efficiency, with a view to the eventual establishment of more joint Departments”.<sup>29</sup>

### Grants to Inter-parliamentary Associations

Sir Kevin noted that Ibbs had recommended that the House should control the annual grants-in-aid to the History of Parliament Trust (HPT), the British-American Parliamentary Group, the United Kingdom Branch of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association and the British Group of the Inter-Parliamentary Union. But in the event the Commission only took on making grants to the HPT.

He then noted that in 2007/08 grants-in-aid to the value of £3.3 million were awarded to the British-American Parliamentary Group, the United Kingdom Branch of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, the British Group of the Inter-Parliamentary Union and the British-Irish Inter-Parliamentary Body. He recommended that the House of Commons Commission should take over the responsibility for making grants to the four inter-parliamentary bodies.<sup>30</sup>

## **Response from the Commission**

The recommendation for more joint services across both Houses was accepted in principle with the proviso that lessons learned from the creation of PICT be taken into account. A wider review of the operation of the *Parliamentary (Joint Departments) Act 2007* would be undertaken in 2009-10.

The Commission also agreed to take on the responsibility for making grant-in-aid payments to the four inter-Parliamentary bodies from April 2008.

## **7. Implementation**

Tebbit concluded with the following observation:

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<sup>29</sup> *Ibid*, paras 265-272

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid*, paras 273-275

This review reiterates much of the Ibbs and Braithwaite prescription, which has been accepted by the authorities of the House. Its recommendations aim to reinforce progress already under way and therefore ought not, by and large, to present an insurmountable challenge to the organisation [from para 276].

Sir Kevin acknowledged that implementation of the review's recommendations would require political authority from the Commission. He concluded that:

279. At a political level, the challenge for the Commission is to find a way of preserving the necessary independence of a self-governing Parliament, while demonstrating robust controls over the use of public resources in delivering the House Service's three primary objectives of serving the House, its Members and the wider public. In this task, the Commission needs the support of a Finance and Services Committee with a clear mission to scrutinise spending proposals, as well as an energetic Administration Committee to ensure that Members' needs are always a prime consideration. An independent Chair of the Audit Committee will strengthen accountability. The implementation of these recommendations is more a matter for political decision at the highest level than a task requiring official support.

280. While it is for the Commission to determine the structure of the Management Board, and the limits of its delegated powers, our prescription works with the grain of developments since Ibbs reported in 1990 which have moved the House Service forward to become a more corporate body with a clearer strategic focus. The strengthened role for the Office of the Chief Executive will be the principal means by which the improvements we recommend will be delivered. In the special case of Estates and Works, action is already under way to implement our proposals. We envisage the need for a dedicated implementation team for the report as a whole. This might be undertaken by a team drawn from across the House Service, reporting direct to the Chief Executive and the Management Board, which might subsequently be folded into the enlarged Office of the Chief Executive.<sup>31</sup>

The Commission charged the Clerk of the House with providing them with a programme for implementation. The Clerk, with the support of the Board of Management, came back with a new vision set out in the Commission meeting of 22 October.

'To create a unified parliamentary service which provides first class advisory, executive and support facilities to the House, its Members and the public whilst maintaining a world heritage site'.

The result of that was that, on 22 October, the Commission agreed to re-align the House Service on functional lines, as described above. The reporting lines are demonstrated in organograms in Section G of this note. A change team engaged with staff of the House to ensure that the creation of the new departments went as smoothly as possible. Further information is available in the Corporate Business Plan 2008, issued by the Management Board in December 2008.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> *Ibid*, paras 279-280

<sup>32</sup> <http://pdvnsco.parliament.uk/bb/corporate/CorporateBusinessPlan2008.pdf>



## D. The House of Commons Administration Act 1978

This section provides some background and history on the management and governance of the House.

The House of Commons Offices Commission was established by the *House of Commons Offices Act 1812*. The Chancellor of the Exchequer and the Speaker were the two active Commissioners on this body, which had an only nominal role in managing the House. It is only in the last forty years that a modern administrative structure has developed.<sup>33</sup>

Following dissatisfaction about the conditions they faced as new Members after the 1964 election, the then Prime Minister, Harold Wilson, announced on 23 March 1965 that the Queen had agreed that the control of the Commons part of the Palace should transfer from the Lord Great Chamberlain to the Speaker. The Treasury retained financial control in respect of the parliamentary vote, however. The House subsequently established a Services Select Committee, chaired by the Leader of the House, to advise the Speaker. Recommendations by Sir Edmund Compton, a former Comptroller and Auditor General, for Treasury control over the staffing of the House were subsequently rejected by a Commons committee chaired by Sir Arthur Bottomley.<sup>34</sup>

There was major reform in 1978 with *House of Commons (Administration) Act*, sponsored by the then Leader of the House, Michael Foot, who had previously ensured that a body of industrial relations law applied to House staff, as Secretary of State for Employment.<sup>35</sup> Reform came partly through staff pressure, since there were no modern contracts of employment. A former senior clerk has commented:

The House of Commons (Administration) Act reflected growing disenchantment and frustration on the backbenches about the ability of the House to influence the level of public funds committed to the service of Parliament, and received all-party support and an easy passage through the House.<sup>36</sup>

The Commission's principal statutory role was to be the employer of the permanent staff of the various departments of the House, determining numbers and grading of staff.<sup>37</sup> The Act gave backbenchers representation on the Commission. Its membership is set out in the Act and consists of the Speaker, Leader of House, a nominee of the Leader of the Opposition (usually the shadow Leader of House), all ex officio, and three Members who are not Ministers. These are normally drawn from the each of the three largest parties. So the Commission's design is intended to prevent domination by the governing party and/or frontbenchers. There is no provision for non-Members to sit on the Commission.

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<sup>33</sup> Detail on developments before the *House of Commons Administration Act 1978* is given in "The Administrative Organisation of the House of Commons" in *The Table* 1980 and in "The autonomy of Parliament" in Dawn Oliver and Gavin Drewry (eds) *Law and Parliament* Study of Parliament Group (1998)

<sup>34</sup> HC 624 1974-75

<sup>35</sup> Section 122 of the *Employment Protection Act 1975* (application of employment legislation to House of Commons). For background, see Geoffrey Lock "Statute law and case law applicable to Parliament" in *Law and Parliament* Study of Parliament Group ed Dawn Oliver and Gavin Drewry (1998)

<sup>36</sup> Bill Proctor "Implementing Ibbs" in *The Table* 1992

<sup>37</sup> The staff in the Speaker's office continue to be appointed personally and are not employed by the Commission. Robert Blackburn and Andrew Kennon, *Parliament: Functions, Practices and Procedures*, p230

The Commission meets monthly in private. Formal minutes are available on the internet. There are regular oral questions on the work of the Commission once a month, answered by a backbench Member of the Commission. Since 2004, the annual report of Commission has been debated by the Commons in Westminster Hall. The Tebbit report noted how individual Commission members had taken on specific tasks:

It has become the tradition for the Liberal Democrat backbench member of the Commission (currently Nick Harvey MP) to act as its spokesman, answering oral and written parliamentary questions. The current Labour member of the Commission (Sir Stuart Bell MP) is also Chairman of the Finance and Services Committee, providing a link between this select committee and the Commission, as originally recommended by Ibbs. The present Conservative member on the Commission (Rt Hon David Maclean MP) is a member of the Joint Committee on Security, and like Sir Stuart Bell sits on the Liaison Committee (in his separate capacity as Chairman of the Joint Committee on Statutory Instruments).<sup>38</sup>

Two select committees advise the Commission. These are the Finance and Services Committee<sup>39</sup> and, on more general services, the Administration Committee.<sup>40</sup> There is also an Administration Estimate Audit Committee of the Commission, established in 2000 following the Braithwaite review (see below) which has two external members. By convention, the Audit Commission is chaired by the Shadow Leader of the House.<sup>41</sup> The House is externally audited by the National Audit Office. The responsibility for running House services and employing staff is delegated to the Board of Management which comprise the heads of each department, plus the Clerk of Committees as representing the Clerk's department. The Board is chaired by the Clerk of the House in his role as Chief Executive.

There are two separate votes, or allocations of money. The first covers the administration costs of House, staff, buildings maintenance and security. This amount is agreed by the House of Commons Commission and does not have to be formally approved by the Government, although senior officials ensure that the total cost is reasonable. Outturn expenditure is set out in the Administration Resource Accounts.<sup>42</sup> The second Vote covers costs of Members' salaries, allowances and pensions as well as financial assistance to political parties (Short Money) This Vote comes under the Supply Estimates laid by the Chancellor of the Exchequer and so the Commission does not have statutory responsibility for such expenditure. However the Clerk of the House is Accounting Officer for both Votes.<sup>43</sup> Outturn expenditure is set out in the Members' Resource Accounts.

The 1978 Act specified that the pay and conditions of staff should be kept "broadly in line" with those in the Civil Service and that the role of Accounting Officer be held by a member of staff (the Clerk of the House). The Act also gave the Commission power to increase or reduce the number of House departments and allocate functions to departments. One of the first actions of the new Commission was to reorganise departments to make the Official Report a separate department.

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<sup>38</sup> Annex 1:Current Governance Arrangements HC 685 2006-07

<sup>39</sup> The Finance and Services Committee is established under SO No 144 .For more detail, see [http://www.parliament.uk/parliamentary\\_committees/finance\\_and\\_services\\_committee.cfm](http://www.parliament.uk/parliamentary_committees/finance_and_services_committee.cfm)

<sup>40</sup> The Administration Committee is established under SO No 139. For background, see [http://www.parliament.uk/parliamentary\\_committees/admin.cfm](http://www.parliament.uk/parliamentary_committees/admin.cfm)

<sup>41</sup> [http://www.parliament.uk/about\\_commons/house\\_of\\_commons\\_commission\\_/audit\\_committee.cfm](http://www.parliament.uk/about_commons/house_of_commons_commission_/audit_committee.cfm)

<sup>42</sup> <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm/cmresacc.htm>

<sup>43</sup> See House of Commons Library Standard Note no 1663 Short Money for details at <http://www.parliament.uk/commons/lib/research/notes/snpc-01663.pdf>

## E. The House of Commons: changes in management since 1978

There has been significant change in the 30 years since the passing of the House of Commons (Administration) Act 1978. At the instigation of the then Leader of the House, Geoffrey Howe, Sir Robin Ibbs, who had been responsible for creating arms-length executive agencies within the Civil Service, reported in 1990 to the House of Commons Commission on House administration.<sup>44</sup> In 1979 the Commission had only acquired responsibility for expenditure on services provided by the departments of the House, and not for printing and publications, or office equipment and buildings. Ibbs made radical recommendations, not all of which were implemented, to create a modern administration. The report recommended the transfer to the Commission of all House of Commons expenditure, except expenditure on Members' salaries and allowances. Ibbs found that there were no financial targets; little forward planning or financial management information. His report led to major changes in the system of domestic committees. From 1991 the Commission undertook to announce its decisions to the House by written answer and each department was required to publish an annual report, appended to the Commission's annual report.<sup>45</sup>

The *Parliamentary Corporate Bodies Act 1992* made the Clerks of both Houses responsible for signing contracts and holding property on behalf of their respective Houses. In 1992 the House took over responsibility for maintenance of the fabric of the Palace from the Property Service Agency, which was being privatised, and for the cost of printing and publishing which had previously been provided on an "allied service" basis. Two separate Votes were established, one for parliamentary works (building maintenance) and one for administration. As Bill Proctor noted, these two votes were presented directly to the House by the Speaker on behalf of the Commission and were not subject to formal control by the Government.<sup>46</sup>

Further reform took place after the Braithwaite report of 1999.<sup>47</sup> Michael Braithwaite was appointed by the House of Commons Commission to review the implementation of Ibbs's recommendations, and found that the pace of reform had been relatively slow and that the hoped-for improvement in the clarity of decision-making had not occurred.<sup>48</sup> The introduction of the domestic select committees had not led to a more corporate approach and the Finance and Services Committee did not develop a central role in managing the House. The Board of Management operated as a forum for discussion and compromise, rather than for strategy and decision. Ibbs gave the Clerk of the House "overall management responsibility.... for the execution of policy in relation to services", but this was not reflected in terms of management *authority*, to ensure a corporate approach to the planning and provision of services.<sup>49</sup>

Following Braithwaite, the Clerk of the House took on the formal role of Chief Executive, while remaining head of the Clerk's Department, and trends towards creating corporate management from six separate departments intensified, with the creation of a new unit, the

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<sup>44</sup> *Report on House of Commons Services by a team led by Sir Robin Ibbs* HC 38 1990-91

<sup>45</sup> HC Deb 3 December 1991 c118w

<sup>46</sup> Bill Proctor "Implementing Ibbs" in *The Table* 1992

<sup>47</sup> *Review of Management and Services: Report to the House of Commons Commission* HC 745 1998-99 available at <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm199899/cmselect/cmhccom/745/intro.htm>

<sup>48</sup> Robert Rogers and Rhodri Walters, *How Parliament Works* (6<sup>th</sup> ed 2006), p60

<sup>49</sup> *Review of Management and Services: Report to the House of Commons Commission* paras 4.47-4.75

Office of the Clerk. From 1 April 2000 the separate Administration and Works Services Votes were merged into one: House of Commons: Administrative Expenditure (Class XVIII A Vote 1). A new Audit Committee was established by the Commission in 2000.

In 2004 the Members' Estimate Committee was established to review the resolutions on pay and allowances for Members and to provide the Speaker with advice. As a select committee its proceedings attract parliamentary privilege. Its membership is identical to that of the Commission.<sup>50</sup> A Members Estimate Audit Committee was established in June 2004 whose membership mirrors that of the Administration Estimate Audit Committee.<sup>51</sup> This Committee therefore unusually contains non-Members, although the MEC itself was established by Standing Orders.

In July 2005 the Administration Committee was established by the House under SO No 139. It replaced the five previous domestic committees that had looked separately at administration, accommodation & works, broadcasting, catering and information. Its role is essentially advisory.<sup>52</sup>

The Commission adopted an outline strategic plan in 2001 and updated it for the period 2006-11 in July 2005 and the Board of Management – which consisted of the heads of the House departments – published a corporate business plan annually from 2003.<sup>53</sup>

## **F. The devolved parliamentary administrations**

The advent of devolution in 1999 brought with it different forms of parliamentary administration, loosely based on the House of Commons Commission model.

### **1. Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body**

The Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body (SPCB) was established to administer the new Scottish Parliament in section 21 of the *Scotland Act 1998*. Its role is “provide the Parliament, or ensure that the Parliament is provided, with the property, staff and services required for the Parliament's purposes.”<sup>54</sup> This is a broader remit than allowed the Commission in the 1978 Act.

Although its structure was clearly based on the House of Commons Commission, there are also some differences in emphasis. The SPCB is chaired by the Presiding Officer and there are four appointed MSPs who are in practice elected by the Parliament. As a commentator on Scottish politics has noted, these MSPs have to date worn more of a party hat than at Westminster:

Although it is nowhere stated that these MSPs represent their parties on the SPCB—and a legal entity such as the SPCB would presume a collective responsibility and representation of members as individuals, rather than a partisan one—in practice, the

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<sup>50</sup> For further details, see [http://www.parliament.uk/parliamentary\\_committees/mec.cfm](http://www.parliament.uk/parliamentary_committees/mec.cfm) and SO No 152D.

<sup>51</sup> The Members Estimate Audit Committee Annual Report for 2005-6 is at <http://www.parliament.uk/documents/upload/aeacrep0506.pdf>

<sup>52</sup> An overview of current governance arrangements is given in Annex 1 of the Tebbit report *Review of Management and Services of the House of Commons* HC 685 2006-07

<sup>53</sup> See <http://www.parliament.uk/documents/upload/CorporateBusinessPlan2007.pdf>

<sup>54</sup> Section 21(3) *Scotland Act 1998*

idea of "party representation" seems to have taken root to some degree, assisted by the "coincidence" of there being four major parties in the 1999-2003 session.<sup>55</sup>

The SPCB website notes the practice of awarding individual portfolios to its members:

The SPCB has agreed portfolio arrangements whereby members take a lead interest in specific issues. These are currently as follows: -

Alex Johnstone MSP – Directorate of Technology & Facilities Management including building maintenance, IT and local office support

Tom McCabe MSP – Resources & Governance Directorate covering Procurement, Allowances and Finance Offices

Tricia Marwick MSP – Access & Information Directorate covering visitor services, events, public information, education and outreach, SPICE and the editorial content of the website and intranet as well as broadcasting and the broader aspects of media relations

Mike Pringle MSP – Corporate issues (including governance, equalities and Personnel issues) and Office Holders/Commissioners<sup>56</sup>

These MSPs are from the Conservative, Labour, SNP and Liberal Democrats respectively. Another difference is that there is no direct equivalent to the post of Leader of the House at Holyrood. The nearest equivalent, the Minister for Parliamentary Business in the Scottish Executive does not sit on the Corporate Body.

## **2. The National Assembly for Wales Commission**

The National Assembly for Wales Commission was created by section 27 of the *Government of Wales Act 2006*. Its role is to be responsible for employing the staff for the National Assembly for Wales, providing support services to Assembly Members and maintaining property, such as the Senedd building in Cardiff Bay. The Act stipulates that the Commission must be multi-party in composition:

27 4) The provision included in the standing orders in compliance with subsection (3) must (so far as it is reasonably practicable to do so) secure that not more than one of the members of the Assembly Commission (other than the Presiding Officer) belongs to any one political group.

This follows concern during the passage of the Act that one party might dominate Assembly administration. Lord Livsey of Talgarth, for the Liberal Democrats, moved an amendment at Lords report stage.<sup>57</sup> The amendment was agreed to on division, by 194 votes to 133.<sup>58</sup> The statutory requirement for multiparty membership is unique in the United Kingdom.

## **3. Northern Ireland Assembly**

Section 40(4) of the *Northern Ireland Act 1998* requires the NIA Commission to provide the Assembly, or ensure that the Assembly is provided with the property, staff and services required for the Assembly to carry out its work. MLAs from each of the five main parties (DUP, SF, UUP,

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<sup>55</sup> Written evidence by Barry Winetrobe to the Welsh Affairs Select Committee 24 October 2005 at <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200506/cmselect/cmwelaf/551/5111011.htm>

<sup>56</sup> <http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/corporate/spcb/index.htm>

<sup>57</sup> HL Deb 27 June 2006, c1127.

<sup>58</sup> HL Deb 27 June 2006, c1131.

SDLP and Alliance) sit on the Commission, which is chaired by the Speaker. The statutory requirement is for five MLAs to be appointed, but that number may be changed through standing orders. The Assembly Secretariat (the Secretariat) is headed by a Chief Executive who is also technically the Clerk to the Assembly and the Accounting Officer for the Secretariat. It is made up of a number of constituent parts – Clerking Committees, Information and Research and Corporate Services.

In October 2007, a review led by George Reid, former Presiding Officer of the Scottish Parliament, recommended management changes to the Assembly Speaker, William Hay.<sup>59</sup> It recommended a new de-layered organisational structure, with a new management board, based on four directorates: Clerking; Resources; Properties; and Engagement, to be headed by the Clerk/Director General. The review also recommended the appointment of a non-executive director to the management board and the creation of an independent parliamentary service separate from the civil service by 2010.

The review placed particular emphasis on the need to develop effective outreach programmes, commenting favourably on the strategies to engage with the public shown by the Scottish Parliament and the Oireachtas.

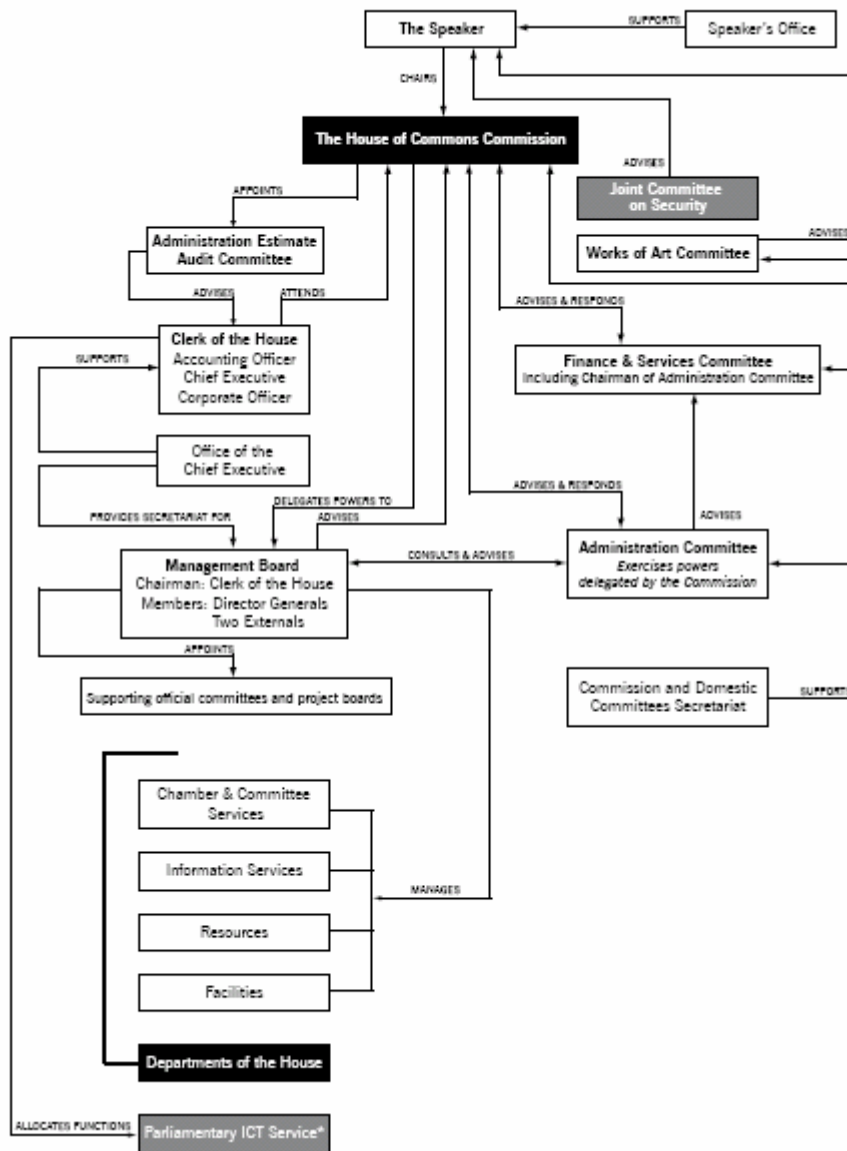
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<sup>59</sup> *Northern Ireland Assembly Secretariat Review Report October 2007*  
[http://www.niassembly.gov.uk/commission/2007mandate/reports/NIA\\_Secretariat\\_Review.pdf](http://www.niassembly.gov.uk/commission/2007mandate/reports/NIA_Secretariat_Review.pdf)

## G. Departmental Organograms

### 1. House of Commons administration

The governance structure of the House of Commons administration from 01.01.08

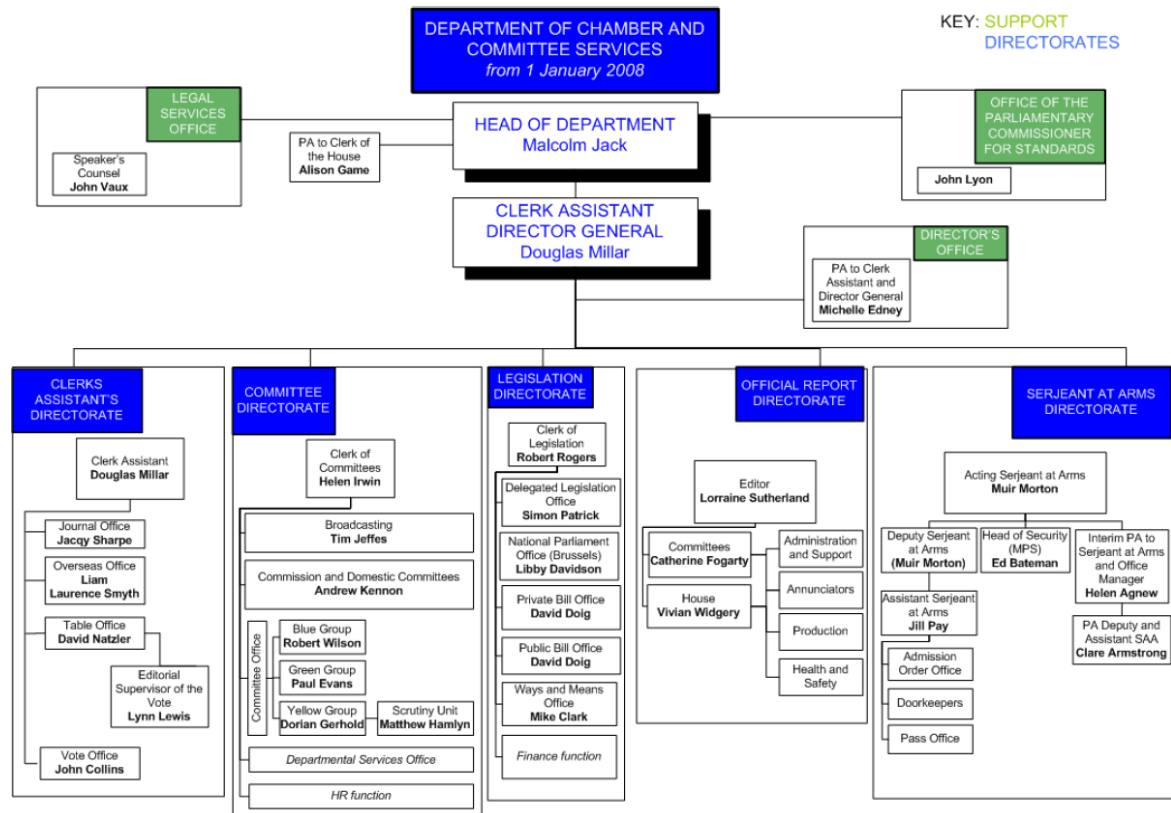


Source: House of Commons Corporate Business Plan 2000.

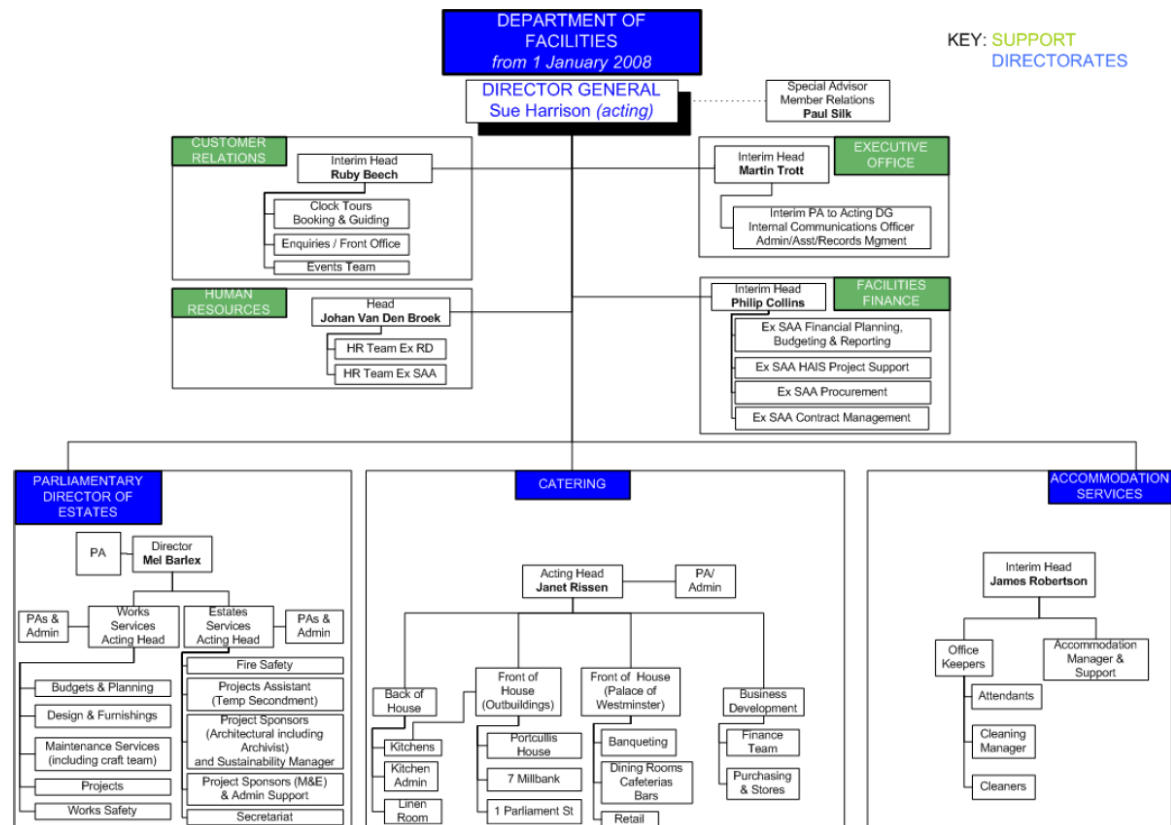
Organograms of the new departments are set out below. They are taken from the Tebbit Change Team intranet pages, where further information about the detail of the changes is available.<sup>60</sup>

<sup>60</sup> <http://pdvnsc0.parliament.uk/bb/offclerk/TebbitReview.htm>

## 2. Department of Chamber and Committee Services

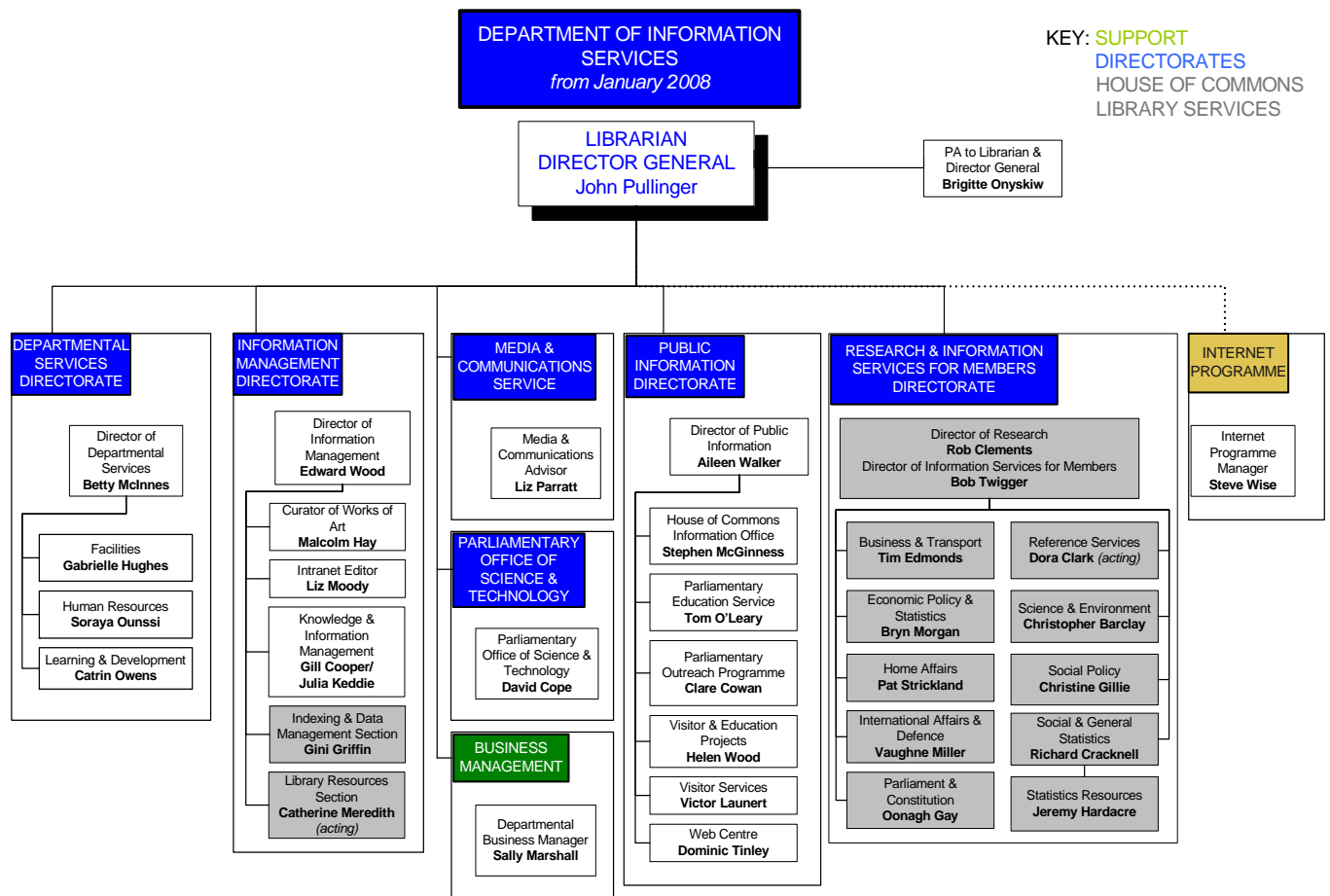


## 3. Department of Facilities





#### 4. Department of Information Services



#### 5. Department of Resources

