Organisational Development: Lessons Learned

What was the OD Programme about?

1. The focus of the OD Programme was to develop our capacity and capability at a time where continued pressures on budgets and ongoing challenges faced by constitutional change and uncertainty. It defined how we would support and develop colleagues with the skills and confidence to deliver our strategic priorities and embrace diverse perspectives.

What did it set out to achieve?

2. We set out to deliver the following, and it is fair to say the programme achieved a lot:

- Define a new approach to diversity and inclusion and embed the strategy into all people management practices;
- Replace the performance management system with a simple, dynamic process to encourage real time performance conversations, supported by an online system;
- Introduce a workforce planning tool to enable managers to take a medium to long term business perspective, supporting them to introduce efficient processes and systems focusing on the end-user experience;
- Devise a simple approach to assessing skills and behaviours with a clear link to our core values;
- Support the new approach to performance management by simplifying the procedures for unacceptable performance and probation;
- Support diversity in leadership through a Women in Leadership Programme;
- Create with LG members a leadership programme to meet their specific development needs;
- Review the effectiveness of the leadership network as a means of developing leadership;
- Create a management development programme to build capability in all areas;
- Create a more agile and strategic approach to attracting and recruiting talent, facilitated by an on-line recruitment management system;
- Create a resourcing pool to meet short-term recruitment needs, reducing our reliance on agencies, temporary promotions and short-term interchange;
- Align HR systems to the Digital Strategy; and
- Modernise our approach to Learning and Development to provide enhanced learning outcomes and high return on investment.

What is the purpose of this report?

3. We have a long-standing commitment to continuous improvement. The purpose of this report is to initiate discussion so that we can learn from mistakes, celebrate success and encourage informed risk taking.
How is it structured?

4. We have structured it using 8 key lines of enquiry (KLOEs) supporting the identified key performance question (highlighted in the centre of the table below). In forming the KPQ and KLOEs we assessed our performance using this maturity model. Each link contains a project summary report, highlighting the challenges, achievements, lessons learned and recommendations.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Are we well led?</th>
<th>To what extent are we continuing to attract high quality diverse candidates?</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Do our policies encourage and support good management and decision making?</td>
<td>Are we a high-performing organisation?</td>
<td>Are we efficiently deploying our people in meeting our current and future requirements?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are there robust systems in place providing accurate information which is used and acted on?</td>
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<td>Are we supporting people to develop and apply their skills?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

How was the programme managed?

5. The programme was managed in line with the agreed governance arrangements which was applied across the programme, setting out the roles and responsibilities for developing, implementing and embedding change. The key responsibilities of LG as ‘sponsoring group’ was to:

- approve the programme delivery plan;
- receive reports and approve recommendations at regular intervals;
- approve the budget and resourcing and provide change leadership throughout the programme by championing the implementation of the programme.

6. The SRO for the programme was David McGill, and a programme board was established to drive the programme forward and deliver the outcomes.

Where are we up to?

7. The programme closed in March 2017 following the endorsement of the OD Board despite some projects continuing. The accountability and remit for
completing this work is captured in the individual project reports along with the governance and reporting arrangements, namely, to LG through the Organisational Performance Framework.

**What were the drivers for change?**

8. Expectations on the parliamentary service were different in the way that we designed and delivered our services. Through our public engagement work, there was, and still is, a commitment to support the Parliament to enhance public participation and strengthen democracy. This, in turn, affected the way we created our content and through our efforts under the Digital Parliament Programme we were changing the way we worked and engaged externally using social media platforms. This followed the Scottish Government (SG) launch of the One Scotland Programme which challenged all public sector organisations to focus on putting people at the centre of their service design and delivery. The programme also challenged employers to reduce inequalities by removing barriers to employment.

9. Internally, many of us have worked here for many years. Whilst this provides strength and stability it also means that we are facing an ageing workforce. There was also low uptake of learning opportunities combined with little staff turnover. With our presumption to recruit internally to meet our no compulsory redundancy agreement, and our workforce was not diverse, and there were no plans in place to respond to the SG’s Programme. This was not sustainable. We had to lead by example by responding positively to the new expectations and the political reality placed on us.

10. These expectations have grown, and given the current societal state of play, it is even more critical to strengthen our ability to modernise our thinking and respond positively to change.

**Why is culture important?**

11. Pragmatically speaking, culture is the way work gets done. The culture of any organisation is a function of the people within and the behaviours in which they engage.

**Why is change so difficult?**

12. Change is rarely a discrete or single event; however, we tend to view it in such a way. More often than not, change occurs gradually, over time. Cultural change does not follow a linear process and people tend to move back and forth through the stages, re-cycling through them until the change becomes fully established. So, it is not a comfortable process as it challenges our assumptions and the way we are used to doing and seeing things. It also asks us to have the faith in the bigger picture, the eventual results, and in each other.

13. This programme is no exception. However, there has been much good practice across the parliamentary service and this has been greatest where colleagues have felt part of the process and/or felt supported through their management
chain. A common feature of all the progress that has been made is recognition of the need for effective leadership.

Was it an organisation-wide effort?

14. Yes. As part of the programme’s engagement, it sought significant feedback from colleagues across the parliamentary service to develop resources, guidance and practical tools. Details of which are highlighted in the individual project reports.

How did the programme engage colleagues?

15. The communication and engagement approach supported the process, outlining roles and responsibilities for implementing and embedding change. This reflects LG’s decision that the change be implemented and embedded within the line. HR through its business partnering role supported Group Heads by tailoring messages and attending team briefings. The project teams also organised drop-in sessions, floor walking, established networks and champions in offices to support the change. It was envisaged that this approach would ensure consistency of message and provide the opportunity for colleagues to clarify their understanding and raise issues. Some activities were very successful, but we had some that had not worked. For example, embedding the performance management approach.

16. The programme also made information available on its engagement site and held several staff engagement sessions. It also used simple infographics to communicate the programme and project benefits.

17. Finally, the SRO engaged LG and other senior colleagues throughout to ensure the messages were disseminated. Key decisions for the programme are captured below.
**How was it delivered?**

18. The programme was consistent of three phases: diagnose, design and implement. The individual project reports describe the finding and cultural change opportunities. This includes where ongoing support is in place to ensure embedded changes can continue or corrective interventions actioned. The projects addressed a number of issues that had been raised by colleagues and were reported as *You said, We listened*. Where possible, we included short case studies and captured staff experiences. They were not intended to represent best practice but to illustrate challenges and practical solutions to them.

19. In some case, the outputs were not exactly as originally envisaged or described, for example the replacement of the Time and Recording System (TRS). Whilst several corporate benefits were achieved, for example, enhanced information for data driven decision making, improved user experience was not fully realised. Project decisions to ensure delivery on timescale were at the expense of simplifying the policies that underly the configuration of the system, for example, flexible working arrangements. This is an important point. User
frustrations around TRS are not system issues and we can look to reconfigure the system whilst retaining the corporate benefits by changing our working practices and policies (see para 14).

What were the key the deliverables and benefits?

20. They key achievements were the:

- **Creation of a Values and Behaviours Framework** which underpins our purpose and vision and forms the basis on which we operate. HR is embedding the values into our people management practices and supporting teams in embedding them into their working practices. Through this we are now assessing performance not only on what we do but how we do it. It encourages cross parliamentary working and through this, we will become a more effective and efficient organisation. Also, we know through our targeting activities that the values of respect and inclusiveness resonates well with people from diverse groups. This will help us to diversity our workforce and meet our strategic D&I aims.

- **Creation of a new Diversity and Inclusion Strategy, supported by our staff-led networks**. Diversity and inclusion are fundamental to how we work, and how we want to develop our staff and develop as an organisation. D&I now underpins all our people management practices, including our shared values. It is well recognised that diversity of perspectives leads to better decision making and improved service delivery. The more diverse we become the more we understand users’ needs. This will help us as we adopt user centric approach to designing our online services.

- Development of talent initiatives to increase representation, for example, Apprenticeships and Women In Leadership. These initiatives will help us to diversity our workforce and meet our strategic D&I aims by attracting young people and encouraging gender balanced leadership and management teams.

- **Creation of a new Employee Handbook** for parliamentary staff and How-to Guide for MSPs’ staff. The content of the Employee Handbook is simplified and presented in a searchable, user-friendly way with a focus on ‘need to know’ information, rights and entitlements. It also contains useful information and directs colleagues to more detailed policy forms and guidance. Our values are embedded throughout. We know that this is helping us to attract candidates from diverse backgrounds. Candidates and new colleagues are telling us that its content and style attracted them to apply to work for us. This is good to know, as we designed it to tell the story of our culture and shared values.

- Initiation of Workforce Planning to strengthen our performance. Fully implemented this will support us to deliver our strategic priorities and the identification of any potential skills gaps and future resourcing requirements;

- **Creation of a new leadership and management framework across all levels in the organisation** including development programmes to meet our aims such as iLM level 3 and 5, LG and Grade 6 coaching and development. The
framework encourages collaboration and provides all colleagues the opportunity to demonstrate leadership qualities, through their actions and behaviours, and in demonstrating our shared values. Fully implemented it has the potential to improve our performance by delivering more effective and sustainable outcomes.

- **Development of an Inclusive Talent Management Strategy.** encouraging colleagues to take responsibility for their own development. We now have several training and Development courses, including IT. This strategy was reviewed by LG in June 2018 when it introduced a ‘Grow our Own’ Programme in BIT. This year will see the introduction of other ‘grow our own’ roles, for example, in Media Relations and Procurement. When fully developed this intervention will help us to recruit and deploy our talented staff in the right areas. This strategy will help us to meet our changing needs and support our D&I commitments.

- **Development of an improved onboarding process, including induction for new managers and staff.** As we recruit external candidates we need to support them by giving them the best start. Feedback from new starts and managers has been great but we recognise that more can be done. We have now produced an onboarding process to support new starts from recruitment through to probation. Through this we will identify any teething issues early on with HR colleagues meeting colleagues and managers separately to see how they are doing. The return on this effort will be that new starts are developed quickly and feel motivated and engaged.

- **Creation of a new performance management approach (including manager as a developer and crucial conversations development programmes).** The approach reflects extensive feedback and has been adapted to meet our needs as defined in the strategic plans. There are clear links to the office plans and the values are embedded throughout. Through regular and effective conversations, we will all be clear about what’s expected of us and motivated to deliver them. Issues will also be dealt with in a timely manner with supportive measures being agreed. If we are all focussed on delivering our shared priorities, this will help us with our aspiration of becoming a high performing organisation.

- **Development of a new recruitment approach.** Full implementation will support the parliamentary service to have the right people with the right skills whilst demonstrating fairness and equality in all selection processes. Better selection processes will lead to the right candidate being selected, leading to a more diverse workforce. Improved recruitment materials and candidate experience will attract high calibre candidates who will help us to deliver our strategic priorities.

- **Creation of an internal level transfer arrangements and temporary pooling arrangements.** We are now attracting and managing our own temporary pool of staff and using a process for managing long term temporary moves. Through these arrangements we have increased the diversity of our staff and made it easier for colleagues to move jobs and improve their skills in other areas. This has strengthened our capacity internally by responding to our changing needs and helped us to deliver against our D&I aims.
• **Updated and simplified HR policies (probation and Improving Performance Policy and Procedures).** Performance issues will be dealt with in a timely manner with supportive measures being agreed. Managers will feel supported and confident.

• **Time and Attendance Recording System.** All teams are now using the same system. This system delivers several corporate benefits, integrating overtime and sick absence information with the payroll system, and providing better management information to assist data driven decisions and workforce planning.

**How did we measure our progress?**

21. In most cases the projects delivered on their outputs to the extent that the programme benefits were realised. We measured our progress using the following:

• **Pulse Surveys** – Throughout the programme we checked how colleagues were thinking and feeling. Surveys also helped us to establish baselines, complement face-to-face meetings, and catch issues early. This included us measuring D&I interventions from awareness to embedding.

• **Recognising and celebrating success** – We used storytelling to drive change. Throughout the programme we heard of great things from colleagues who got involved from volunteering and career ready to taking time out to learn new skills. Storytelling also helped us to put facts around the programme into an emotional context. Many of the projects were personal in nature, for example, diversity and inclusion issues are not experienced by everyone in the same way. Watch this video to hear how our colleagues got on in the Women in Leadership and Apprenticeship programmes. By sharing experiences in this way meant that we were able to communicate that learning new skills and diversity are personal experiences. The important message here was that we all should have a shared appreciation of the value diversity brings to the organisation. This went to the heart of the OD Programme and the stated values of the organisation.

• **External recognition** - Benchmarking serves as an objective measuring stick. It helps us to make informed decisions, create interventions as well as improve processes and systems. Through the programme benchmarking activities told us not only how we were performing in relation to others, but also supported us to further improve our people management practices. Essentially, it provided a reference point for implementing and embedding change. Participating in annual benchmarking audits has made us evaluate our services and helped us to understand in more depth the opportunities.
• **Measuring effectiveness of L&D** - The programme identified the need to improve the way we were measuring training effectiveness. It also recognised the need to use more effective methods of development, including those which focused on the impact of behaviours, which build in time from reflection and feedback. HR colleagues are now using this framework to measure the effectiveness of corporate led programmes. In doing so, it will help us to evaluate whether learned knowledge and skills are being applied on the job. The framework will be mainstreamed across all learning development opportunities, including legal compliance training in 2019/2020. This will ensure we are investing our training budgets in the right way.

**What were the lessons learned and recommendations?**

22. At a programme level, the key lessons gained are captured below. This information can be usefully shared with and applied to other complex change programmes and projects to:

- Avoid making the same mistakes as others;
- Improve current delivery standards by adopting proven good practice; and
- Contribute to organisational growth and maturity by effecting long-term improvements

23. Programme Management – did the programme follow or lead a successful management path?

- Programme management utilising the Managing Successful Programmes (MSP) methodology was successfully tailored to the programme and projects. It adhered to the programme planning and reporting principles. SROs and HR colleagues assigned to the programme were effective. **Clear and appropriate governance arrangements are critical to enabling benefits realisation.**

- **Resourcing was a constant challenge within the programme.** HR colleagues had the challenge of carrying out significant work and were expected to double-hat, for example, deliver the review of the Staff Cost Provision under the Members’ Expenses Scheme whilst delivering their day to day operations (and supporting the people aspects of the 2016 election). **Inevitably, projects under the programme slipped, as the work supporting members’ services and business as usual activities took precedence to the detriment of the project schedules.** Although the risks associated with overloading were identified, the mitigating activities of trying to minimise this proved insufficient.
Recommendation – That, where possible, we should back-fill internal roles to free-up resources to reduce the risk of delaying project schedules and/or effecting business as usual performance.

Recommendation – That, at a corporate level, where there is competing timescales, there should be better scheduling of priorities to determine impact on staffing resource that has been allocated to support other agreed programmes of work and business as usual activities. Where such issues are apparent decisions should be made about whether priorities and/or projects could be delayed and/or resourced differently, for example, using external contractors as leads and backfill through to completion.

- As the programme spanned over 2 financial years this caused challenges in terms of budget. The programme was one of many strategic priorities, so it had to compete for budget against other bids in a challenging financial situation. The Programme Manager left part way through the programme (due to budgetary restrictions) and was replaced by an internal, less experienced manager. This did not have a significant effect on the programme as the internal candidate had a deeper understanding of the organisation’s culture, so this insight had a beneficial effect on the delivery of the programme.

Recommendation – That, where possible, use experienced programme managers through to completion. The additional cost incurred would be weighed against the reduced risk of failure and the increased risk of delivering to required quality.

- Programmes of this kind that seek to change people’s behaviour or attitudes are challenging to deliver and can be unpredictable. Through its governance arrangements the programme created an influential and diverse senior board to guide and drive the change at all levels. To make change stick, Group Heads were asked to take responsibility for embedding change within their groups. HR provided support and specialist input, often working behind the scenes in its business partnering role. Despite this, there was an assumption that leadership for embedding the programme’s benefits post closure would sit with HR rather than with Group/Office Heads and Team Leaders. A key lesson here is that we must get better at managing both the process of change and dealing with the negative effects of change. It is one thing to introduce new tools and technology, it is another to create the benefits from these changes. For changes of this nature to be successful, we found that we must look beyond the creation of project outputs. Projects must consider strategies to get users to adopt and use the outputs, whatever they are. This means that while we must be sensitive to how people are feeling we must also keep in mind that the process of commitment and acceptance takes time. This will involves driving people from their comfort zones until the vision is realised. Otherwise, there is a real risk that benefits will not be fully realised and we will regress to the previous state of affair.

Recommendation – That we provide this clarity by having clear accountability to embed and sustain change. To take matters forward a working group (perhaps made up of our Internal Communications Manager, members of the grade 6 network and headed up by an LG member) be
established to define a change management framework for managing and embedding change.

24. Programme deliverables – did the programme deliver all expected outcomes, i.e. develop capability and capacity to respond to our emerging needs?

- In the main; however, the benefits of strategic workforce planning are yet to be realised. Workforce planning was viewed as the main output of the programme to help embed all the benefits identified and to strengthen our performance. The programme identified the need for a more structured approach. This was considered particularly useful during times of change to help us stay resilient as well as face the challenges ahead in a positive and proactive way. LG is currently looking at its planning and governance arrangements and the feeling of busyness in general. Good workforce planning will support this as it will help LG to take a strategic overview of staffing resources and lead on a long-term plan for workforce development. In doing so, this will help managers to be best placed to manage and develop their existing talent, as well as recruit the new talent we need to make the parliamentary service a diverse, inclusive and high performing organisation. It will also help aspiring colleagues to step forward and reorganise people into roles they are more suited, as our services change and adapt. In short, it will support LG to anticipate the future, so there are no surprises.

Recommendation - That, while some work has been done to prepare workforce planning, e.g. through the efforts of the Constitutional Issues Board, a more structured approach is now required. It is recommended that LG agree a common approach to workforce planning and require Group/Office Heads and Team Leaders to commit to using it. Workforce planning should be an integral part of our strategic planning process.

- As the programme focussed on developing our capacity and capability, this meant that we were in a better position to effectively respond when issues of sexual harassment were raised in 2017. Under the programme, there had been high engagement across the organisation to communicate and embed the D&I Strategy, so this put us in a good position to respond and support those people who had experienced alleged unacceptable behaviour and conduct. In addressing the cultural issues, and in line with the governance arrangements agreed by LG at the start of the programme, Group Heads led discussions with their teams and defined the resulting policy changes and interventions to address the issues raised through the engagement activities with staff.

Recommendation – That this approach be adopted to manage future cultural change initiatives/significant change projects. It strengthened the line of accountability.

25. Project Deliverables – did the individual workstreams successfully deliver all expected outputs and benefits?
Do our policies encourage and support good management and decision making?

- **LG agreed to devolve decision making down the line**, as appropriate and asked Group Heads and HR colleagues to define what this meant in practice. Delegating this to Group Heads brought about the required change. **However, this has created inconsistency across the parliamentary service.** Following the grade 6 development it is evident that Heads of Office/Team Leaders require clarity around the delegations of decision making to be effective in their role.

  **Recommendation -** That LG review the level of decision making to ensure decisions are taken at a level that is closer to individual circumstances. This will give greater autonomy and will enable managers to take swift and fair decisions at the point of need. We could create responsibility matrixes for introducing and embedding change into working practices to enable this.

To what extent do we encourage candid discussions about performance (including behaviour) and development throughout the year?

- **Under this workstream, it was agreed that a digital approach to performance management be adopted.** At that point in time, we were committed to developing digital by default solutions. This influenced the decisions that we made. In hindsight the programme put technology over the outcome of project, that is, to encourage colleagues to have regular conversations to enable high performance. We opted for a digital solution to enable crude reporting i.e. measuring the frequency of meetings. This meant that we focussed too much of measuring the number of meetings that were taken place rather than whether the meetings were effective or not. **Hosting the admin side of the approach on SPLearning was a mistake.** We quickly recognised this and changed our approach.

  **Recommendation –** That we should take the time to critically assess whether using existing systems can meet the perceived benefit. Also, critically assess whether the perceived benefit is in fact an actual benefit or not. In projects there will always be competing priorities however we must balance these to identify the best solution to deliver the identified outcome. We can do this by asking the right questions and seeking feedback on various options.

To what extent are we continuing to attract high quality diverse candidates?

- This project continued beyond the closure with the Group Head for HR and FM performing the role of SRO. There were no additional resources to progress the recruitment review project within the HR team. This led to the project not completing on time.

  **Recommendations -** When we continue to run projects post programme closure, we must consider the required resources and set realistic timescales for delivery. We note that the OPF is being reviewed, and this will strengthen the governance arrangements that hold SROs to account for the delivery and resourcing arrangements.
Are we encouraging a culture of inclusion and respect and challenging behaviours that are contrary to those values (D&I Strategy)?

- When introducing a far-reaching strategy that underpins a programme of work we should plan several engagement exercises with senior colleagues to give them the time to reflect and to consider how and what that means for the organisation. 
  
  **Recommendation** – Critical paths to deliver programmes should be continually reviewed against individual projects to mitigate delays. Underpinning strategies such as the D&I Strategy should be prioritised, and front loaded. **When critical projects are running late, we must always review the programme timeline and adjust accordingly, including intended scope and resourcing decisions.**

Are we well led?

- **Leading from the top and driving the change is critical to providing an organisation with the capability to develop.** Under the programme, we invested significantly in developing our senior leaders, including grade 6 colleagues. The Grade 6 programme envisaged an important role for a cohort of Office Heads/Team Leaders to support Group Heads in embedding the changes underway. **Group Heads were invited to sponsor one or two colleagues to do this.** However, it was then decided that all grade 6 colleagues should go through the programme. This lost meaning and the intention, and the opportunity was lost. 
  
  **Recommendation** – That, what should have been a positive and supportive intervention, led to some colleagues feeling disengaged and confused. We should always refer to what it is that we are trying to achieve.

Are there robust systems in place providing accurate information which is used and acted on?

- We treated the time and attendance project as a replacement of a system. **The project solved the issues innate to Crown but moved many of these including poor user experience to TRS.** This was a result of decisions we made to deliver the project on time at the expense of simplifying the pay policies and working arrangements.  
  
  **Recommendation** – That to enhance the user experience, we should look to reconfigure the system whilst retaining the corporate benefits. 
  
  **Recommendation** – That we should always take a user centred approach to designing systems and services. This was a key design feature of the programme that was not adhered to. We can do this by asking the right questions and seeking feedback on various options. **To realise the benefits identified in the programme, we should review our working practices and reconfigure the system.**
Where are we now?

26. The implications of Brexit and constitutional issues will continue to dominate, and we will need to be agile in our response, ensuring MPSs are well supported in carrying out their demanding responsibilities. Alongside this, digital is increasing the public’s expectations of the speed and convenience of the services they use. The Web and Online Project gives us an opportunity to reassess how we create content, collaborate online to enhance user experiences, and identify opportunities to continually improve our services.

27. The web project, along with our other digital efforts, is likely to change how we work, and the skills required from the workforce of the future. This, coming at a time when we are changing our resourcing model and becoming less reliant on contractors, agency staff and secondees (e.g. legal colleagues) and offering direct employment. When the employment rates in Edinburgh are higher than both the Scottish and UK averages, and the UK Government’s proposed changes to immigration policy. The sectors we predominantly recruit to (professional, technical or managerial) make up 56% of jobs in Edinburgh, whilst candidate expectations and motivations are becoming more demanding. In this increasingly competitive market for talent, we must plan ahead to make sure we have the right skills to embrace change and deliver high quality services.

Should our investment in our staff continue?

28. Yes. Against this backdrop of higher public expectations, emerging technologies, ongoing financial constraints and constitutional change and uncertainty, we must continue to build on the benefits of the programme to increase efficiency and improve service delivery.

What are the next steps?

29. We will agree an action plan to implement the recommendations outlined in this report. HR colleagues will also facilitate discussions with senior colleagues to identify our workforce development requirements. The outputs will be used to produce a People Strategy for the parliamentary service.