



HOUSE OF LORDS SERVICES COMMITTEE

Review of trial of changes to the catering services provided in the Bishops' Bar

Background

1. The Services Committee previously received papers proposing changes to the service provided in the Long Room and Bishops' Bar in September 2018, December 2018, January 2019 and July 2019. The Committee agreed to make the trialled changes in the Long Room permanent in July 2019.
2. In July 2019 the Committee also agreed to trial the following catering arrangements in the Bishops' Bar:
 - *All food preparation to be removed from the Bishops' Bar to satisfy health and safety requirements.*
 - *All food production to take place in the main kitchens.*
 - *Retention of a similar service in the Bishops' Bar, to include a beverage service of alcoholic/non-alcoholic and hot drinks and self-service of wrapped basic and premium sandwiches and salads, fruit pots, yoghurts, snacks, and soup to eat in or takeaway. The opening times would not change.*
3. The trial of changes commenced in October 2019, to be reviewed by the Committee in December 2019. The subsequent dissolution period resulted in a delay to the review. The Committee then agreed to defer the review until April 2020, to allow further time for the changes to be in trialled.

Impact of COVID-19

Due to the impact of COVID-19, alongside most other outlets on the Estate, the Bishops' Bar has been closed since 25 March, in line with government advice.

Feedback from Members and CRS staff

4. CRS has received and collated feedback on the trialled changes from both Members and CRS staff, including any positive or negative impacts, either from a view of the service received or the service provided.
5. The feedback has been provided from responses to the Members' survey, (held between 28 October 2019 and 13 February 2020), as well as verbal feedback received during this period. Where feedback has resulted in identifying an area where specific, immediate improvement can be made, this has been actioned and noted below.
6. The main concern raised was regarding the removal of the freshly made to order sandwiches and toasted sandwiches, which is the part of the service that needed to change for CRS to satisfy Health & Safety requirements. CRS has carefully considered this feedback and can make arrangements to reinstate a toasted sandwich offer; these sandwiches would be pre-prepared and wrapped in the kitchen, then toasted to order in the Bar, in a new enclosed,

microwave style oven, specifically designed for this type of product. This will satisfy health and safety requirements by replacing the previous system involving the use of the hot panini grill, thus minimising the risk of burns to CRS staff.

7. It has not been possible to reinstate made to order sandwiches, but the current menu would be kept under review to ensure a range of products to meet member requirements.
8. Changes made in response to verbal feedback from members
 - Bloomer bread has been swapped for sliced bread
 - Two additional salads have been added to the selection along with additional sandwich fillings
 - A freshly made cake is available daily
 - Avocado is freshly prepared in the kitchen, then made available in the Bishops Bar for staff to add to the salads when purchased.

Decision by Services Committee

9. At its meeting on 11 June the Services Committee agreed to the trial changes to the catering services in the Bishops' Bar being made permanent with the addition of toasted sandwiches using a new machine meeting health and safety requirements.