



SERVICES COMMITTEE

Minutes

Thursday 24 February at 1pm in Committee Room G and on Microsoft Teams

Present:

Lord Touhig (Chair)
Lord Ashton of Hyde
Lord Clark of Windermere
Lord Clement-Jones
Baroness Deech
Lord Haselhurst
Lord Howard of Rising
Lord Judge
Lord Stoneham of Droxford
Baroness Wheeler

Together with the Clerk of the Parliaments.

Andy Helliwell (Chief Operating Officer), Fehintola Akinlose (Director of Finance) and Carl Woodall (Director of Facilities) were also in attendance. Alison Giles (Director of Parliamentary Security) Oliver Dixon (Senior Project Lead, IHSE) and Neil Baverstock (Yeoman Usher) attended for item 5; Justin Hills (Head of Property and Office Services) attended for item 6; Tony Magnante attended for item 7; John Angeli (Director of the Parliamentary Broadcast Unit) attended for item 8; and Stephen Perkins (Head of Catering and Retail Service) attended for item 9.

1. Apologies

There were no apologies.

2. Minutes of the 8th meeting, and matters arising

The Committee agreed the minutes of the previous meeting.

The Committee could expect further updates on the Parliamentary Health and Wellbeing Strategy and Electric Vehicle Charging at future meetings.

3. Chair's Notices S/21-22/60 [RESTRICTED]

The Committee noted the updates, including the feedback shared on the decision to end financial support for members printing Parliamentary work from home.

4. Verbal update on R&R

The Commissions of both Houses had met in the last month to discuss Restoration and Renewal (R&R). The House of Commons had decided it did not wish to pursue either of the two options brought forward by the programme. It also resolved to replace the Sponsor Body with a different form of governance. Following the decisions, the Lords Commission agreed to the Sponsor Body being replaced once a suitable and externally validated alternative had been found. The Commissions would hold a joint meeting in March to agree how to move forwards.

The cost estimates provided by the Sponsor Body had been published online and in the Libraries of both Houses. The Public Accounts Committee would meet in March to consider R&R.

5. Security Programme Update: West Front Perimeter Project S/21-22/61 [HIGHLY RESTRICTED]

Plans for the Peers' Entrance had been shared with a number of members as part of the consultation on and engagement work of the project. There was a display in the Royal Gallery setting out the details of the proposals and so far, the feedback had largely been positive.

The Director of Security set out the security case for the project which would form part of a programme of security improvements to the West Front. Considerable consideration had been given to minimising the impact on members during the works **REDACTED**.

The project team had looked at flow rates of members using the entrance during votes and were confident that the entrance would be able to cope. **REDACTED**

A planning permission request would be submitted in March but initial exploratory conversations with Westminster City Council had been positive.

The Director of Security welcomed feedback on consultation with members so far and how messaging could be improved ahead of the Members' Forum next month.

6. Fielden House Update S/21-22/62 [RESTRICTED]

The paper provided an update on the future use of Fielden House, following previous agreement from the Committee that it could be used by the Administration. It was proposed that the building would be used by the Committee Office, freeing up 37 offices in Millbank House. Those offices would initially be retained by the Administration to act as decant space during expected intrusive R&R surveys.

7. Estates Works Update – February 2022 S/21-22/63 [UNRESTRICTED]

The Committee received an update on ongoing works in the Lords part of the estate.

The Committee was informed that asbestos surveys taking place were part of R&R exploratory works to be able to more accurately map the location and condition of asbestos on the estate.

From March traffic marshals would be in place in Peers' Car Park as the dismantling of the West Front scaffolding began to direct cars and pedestrians.

8. Charging model for broadcast coverage of select committees S/21-22/64 [RESTRICTED]

The paper proposed raising the public profile of select committees by removing the fee for access to broadcast coverage. The Committee agreed to the removal of fees for broadcasters' access.

9. Update paper on options for service provision within the Bishops' Bar, Long Room, Peers' Dining Room, and Barry Room and Millbank House Café proposals S/21-22/65 [RESTRICTED]

The paper set out a number of possible options for the operation of catering outlets in the Lords, including the financial impact of each option. The Chair had contacted all members of the Committee over the last week to discuss the paper and how agreement could be reached given the variety and strength of feeling across the House. It was proposed that the Bishops' Bar would open 12-10pm on sitting days with a review after a year. The Bar would open for tea, coffee, drinks and nibbles only. No other food would be served.

Operating the Bishops Bar in a more limited way than before the pandemic would allow for savings of £71k/ year whilst still providing members with an additional space to meet informally.

The Committee agreed to plans for the operation of the Bishops' Bar and a scoping exercise on the future of the Long Table, to find a suitable space that provided privacy without impacting on services currently enjoyed by members in the Long Room. The Committee agreed that the decision on the Bishops' Bar should be communicated to members as soon as possible. It was informed that the Bar could be operational in two weeks.

The Committee also agreed to close the Barry Room at lunchtimes and to 'mothball' the Millbank Café and enhance the hot food offers from the Millbank 'Pod'.

10. Forward Work Programme S/21-22/66 [UNRESTRICTED]

The Committee took note of the forward work programme.

11. AOB

The next meeting will be on Thursday 24 March at 1pm.

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

Jen Mills
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