



Finance Committee

Minutes

Wednesday 15 July 2020 at 4.15pm on Microsoft Teams

Present:

Lord Colgrain
Lord Collins of Highbury
Earl of Courtown
Lord Cromwell
Lord Cunningham of Felling
Baroness Doocey (Chair)
Baroness Goudie
Lord Kerslake
Baroness Noakes
Lord Stoneham of Droxford

together with the Clerk of the Parliaments.

Fehintola Akinlose (Finance and Procurement Director), Jonathan Smith (Head of Finance) and Carl Woodall (Director of Facilities) were in attendance. Eric Hepburn (Director of Parliamentary Security), Simon Hankins (Head of Security Operations) and Elaine Thain (Business Management Director) attended for the Parliamentary Security Department update; Patrick Vollmer (SRO, Archives Relocation Programme) and Alex Smith (Programme Delivery Manager) were in attendance for the Archives Relocation Programme; Richard Blake (Director of PPCS) was in attendance for the PPCS update; and Caroline Filippini (Assistant Director, Strategic Estates) and Dominic Forbes (Assistant Director, Strategic Estates) were in attendance for the MEPFS update.

Agreeing the minutes of the last meeting, and matters arising

The minutes of the Committee's June meeting were agreed.

It was noted that the Committee should be given sufficient time to consider the Property Asset Management Plan (PAMP) in advance of it going to the Commission. It was expected that the Committee would consider the Plan at its September meeting, ahead of it being presented to the Commission.

Parliamentary Security Department update (F/19-21/25) [HIGHLY RESTRICTED]

The Committee considered the paper.

[INFORMATION REDACTED]

Archives Relocation Programme update (F/19-21/26) [RESTRICTED]

The Senior Responsible Owner (SRO), Patrick Vollmer, had taken over the programme in June 2019 and since then a substantially new team had been put in place and the programme restarted. The aim of the programme was to find a new home for the Archives, reduce the risk to the collection and provide an archive service for the duration of Restoration and Renewal if a permanent home could not be found.

A property search was underway with three broad options being considered:

- A building in Westminster or Zone 1 with space allowing for collection care, a reading room and possibly an exhibition space;
- A warehouse space, likely within the M25, with space for the provision of back office functions and possibly a reading room; and
- A similar space in the regions, somewhere well connected with the ability to move documents to London in good time.

The option of a partnership remained a possibility; of those considered so far none had been found to be viable, however there were still further options to consider. Member engagement would take place once there was clarification about the options available. A set of evaluation criteria was to be developed independently of the programme to inform the options appraisal.

The Chair noted that it was regrettable that previous comments from the Committee on this subject, including on the preference for one move not two and for locations outside London to be considered for the majority of the Archives, appeared not to have been passed on to the current programme team.

Parliamentary Procurement and Commercial Service update (F/19-21/27) [HIGHLY RESTRICTED]

The Committee was presented with the first Procurement update in its new format. A member felt the update could be improved by including details of the actions proposed to move red and amber risks to green: it was agreed that this be included in future updates. A meeting would also be arranged between the Chair and the Director of PPCS to discuss how future reports could provide more clarity to the reader. The Committee took note of the update.

Mechanical, Electrical, Public Health and Fabric Safety Programme update (F/19-21/28) [HIGHLY RESTRICTED]

The Mechanical, Electrical, Public Health and Fabric Safety (MEPFS) Programme focused on maintaining the existing systems and ensuring safety on the Estate. It was intended that the programme would provide mitigation for the risk of catastrophic failure of systems until the Restoration and Renewal Programme (R&R) began.

The increase in the budget over the last year was due to the improved knowledge of the risks, and the deliverables being better understood following intrusive surveys. So far only £32.5m had been approved and committed to the programme, the costs for the remainder of the programme would be subject to approvals for each project as scoped in individual business cases. The impact of COVID-19 had been minimal as the programme was in its

feasibility and design stage and therefore not currently mobilised on site. The team had been able to continue to work from home throughout the period.

The mechanical and electrical systems being installed would provide around 15 years of operational service. Only a small number of the mechanical and electrical systems were being replaced, so the programme was not a long term solution but risk mitigation to try to ensure the Palace remained safe and usable until R&R began. The R&R Programme was aware of the work of the MEPFS programme, and there were R&R representatives on the project board; all of the information from the surveys and works taking place was being shared with R&R.

The Committee took note of the update.

Costs of Virtual and Hybrid Proceedings (F/19-21/29) [HIGHLY RESTRICTED]

The Committee was provided with updated costs for virtual and hybrid proceedings. The broadcasting hub was currently set up in 7 Millbank, largely under temporary contractual arrangements, and it was intended that the model should be adapted and the equipment purchased to mitigate some of the cost, as well as providing more flexibility and functionality. The new model would also serve to improve business resilience.

Improvements to Committee Rooms to enable hybrid Committee sittings would increase the functionality of the rooms and enhance the resilience of the work of the House to meet current and future challenges.

VAT was not applicable to the cost of the current service model. The current service provision was being supported by a mixture of permanent broadcasting staff, temporary broadcasting staff and House staff redeployed to support proceedings.

The planning assumption agreed by the Management Board was that hybrid proceedings would continue to need to be supported in some form until the end of the financial year. This was not a prediction but an assumption to allow offices to plan resources for the rest of the year. This assumption would be subject to regular review.

[INFORMATION REDACTED]

Any other business

The Finance Committee update paper previously agreed by correspondence was expected to go to the Commission in the week commencing 29 July.

The Committee would next meet on Wednesday 30 September at 4.15pm.

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

Gabrielle Longdin
Clerk

HLFinanceCommittee@parliament.uk