



SERVICES COMMITTEE

Minutes

Thursday 26 January at 12.15pm in Committee Room G and on Microsoft Teams

Present:

Baroness McIntosh of Hudnall (Chair)
Lord Clark of Windermere
Lord Clement-Jones
Baroness Deech
Lord Haselhurst
Lord Howard of Rising
Lord Judge
Lord Stoneham of Droxford
Baroness Wheeler
Baroness Williams of Trafford

Together with the Clerk of the Parliaments.

Michael Winders (Director of Communications), Fehintola Akinlose (Director of Finance), Andy Helliwell (Chief Operating Officer) and Carl Woodall (Director of Facilities) were also in attendance. John Angeli (Head of Broadcasting) attended for item 5; Justin Hills (Head of Property and Office Services) attended for item 7; and Alison Giles (Director of Parliamentary Security) and Bev Weston (Director of Capital Investment, Strategic Estates) attended for item 8.

1. Apologies

There were no apologies received.

This would be Lord Clement-Jones' last meeting of the Committee before the rotations took place at the end of the month. The Chair thanked him for his service and particularly the Digital User Group reports that the Committee would continue to receive.

It would also be the last meeting for the Committee Clerk, Jen Mills, who would be moving on to a new role in February. The Chair thanked her for her work and wished her well in her new role.

The Chair noted it was her first meeting as Chair of the Committee. The Committee welcomed the new Chair.

2. Minutes of the 7th meeting, and matters arising

The Committee agreed the minutes of the previous meeting.

Work had progressed on the Electrical Vehicle Charging Points (EVC) project. It was expected that the installation and commissioning would take place between Easter and the summer recess. The Committee would have the opportunity to review the estate wide EVC policy once it was finalised.

Engagement on the Bishops' Bar and Millbank House catering would begin soon with the Usual Channels, with the first meetings taking place before the February recess. Members were offered the opportunity to tour the current catering facilities in Millbank House.

3. Notices From the Chair S/22-2344 RESTRICTED

The paper noted the vacancy for a Lords member representative on the Travel Office Consumer Panel and asked for volunteers. No volunteers were forthcoming but the whips and Convenor were asked to consider if there were any interested candidates in their groups.

4. Digital works: six-month update S/22-23/45 RESTRICTED

Due to unforeseen circumstances no one from the Parliamentary Digital Service (PDS) was available for the meeting. The Chief Operating Officer (COO), as Senior Responsible Officer for the Transforming Digital Programme, stepped in to provide responses to questions.

The COO highlighted the work PDS had delivered over the last six months including: pass reader voting, Operation Marquee, and continued delivery of cyber security across the network. There were also changes being made to operational systems to better support members, such as the delivery of the new issue reporting service ServiceNow.

A member raised a question on the current WiFi provision for members, noting the difficulties some members were experiencing in having to log in to the network every day. The Committee was informed that there were separate WiFi services for members using parliamentary devices and for those using personal devices. When using parliamentary devices connection should be automatic and not require the member to log in. At present where personal devices were used members were required to log in to the network each day upon entering the estate. There was a programme of work looking at improving the WiFi on personal devices: it would first look at the performance and capacity of the network and then look to resolve the issue requiring members to log on each day. A pilot was underway and delivery was expected by the summer. In the interim the PDS drop in service would be able to support members experiencing issues to make the logging in process as easy as possible.

A question was also raised on telephony. The current system required members to log in in order to be able to use handsets. There was a pilot underway looking at a software solution to the issue. The Committee would be updated on the timeline for roll out of the solution.

The new intranet was due to be delivered in the summer. A member noted that the pass reader voting system result announcement sometimes took longer than the previous voting system.

The Committee took note of the update.

5. Proposed New Broadcasting Licence S/22-23/46 RESTRICTED

The Committee was asked to agree that the Licence be recommended to the Commission for approval. The Commons Commission had already agreed the new licence.

The Head of Broadcasting informed the Committee that the new licence was required as the current licence was not compliant with the law on fair dealing. The new licence expanded the options for use of footage from the Chamber but did not allow for it to be manipulated or altered to misrepresent proceedings.

There were options available to the Broadcasting Team where it felt that footage had been misused. The licence could be withdrawn from that broadcaster, or where archive footage was requested it could be refused.

The Committee agreed to recommend to the Commission that the broadcasting licence be updated as proposed.

6. Temporary Closure of the Smoking Area in Black Rod's Garden S/22-23/47 RESTRICTED

The paper requested that the Committee agree the temporary closure of Black Rod's Garden smoking area for the installation and removal of scaffolding to support stonework restoration work in the area. The closures would take place during the February and Easter recesses; no sitting days would be affected.

The Committee agreed to the temporary closure of the smoking area.

7. Estates Works Update S/22-23/48 RESTRICTED

A member asked that when stands were used for member engagement on works projects consideration is given to alternative locations during the winter months as the Royal Gallery was particularly cold. The feedback was noted.

In response to a question the Committee was informed that Room 3 on the First Floor West Front had suffered from flooding from the room above, with occupants being decanted. On attempting to make good the water damage further issues with the ceiling had been discovered. The issue had been escalated to the Director of Parliamentary Maintenance. An interim solution was expected to be delivered over the February recess that would allow the room's occupants to return until a full fix was actioned over the summer recess.

The Committee took note of the update.

8. Agreed works to Peers' Entrance S/22-23/49 RESTRICTED

The Commission had received a paper on the project the previous week and had endorsed the proposal. Engagement sessions for members had been held, and a good number of members had attended the stands; further sessions were planned for the following week. The Director of Parliamentary Security was confident that there would not be queues to enter the building during divisions. **REDACTED.**

The addition of a fence line along the West Front was part of the wider Security Programme; planning permission was currently being sought. The Committee would have the opportunity to consider updated plans for the Parliament Square Streetscape Project later in the year. The Clerk of the Parliaments, together with the Clerk of the House of Commons, was legally responsible for security on the estate.

The Committee took note of the update.

9. Forward Work Programme S/22-23/50 UNRESTRICTED

The Forward Work Programme was circulated for the Committee's information.

10. AOB

The Committee was informed that the progress had been made on the trial of drop-in spaces for members to take virtual meetings. A number of locations had been identified including: outside the Table Office; outside Room 9 on First Floor West Front; in the Royal Gallery; and outside the Librarian's Office. The trial would take place from the February recess until the Whitsun recess, with green furniture loaned from the Commons. Subject to the trial being successful the House would then look at purchasing its own red equipment. The Facilities Team had also submitted a joint bid with the Commons looking to repurpose the telephone boxes found across the Estate for a similar purpose.

Communications on the pods would be sent to all members and explanations of their purpose would be attached to the pods themselves. Members suggested that the Women Peers' Room may also be considered as a possible location.

The next meeting would be on Thursday 23 February at 12.15pm.

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

Jen Mills
Clerk

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