



SERVICES COMMITTEE

Minutes

Thursday 26 November at 1pm on Microsoft Teams

Present:

Lord Laming (Chair)
Lord Ashton of Hyde
Lord Borwick
Lord Campbell-Savours
Lord Judge
Baroness Morris of Bolton
Lord Stoneham of Droxford
Lord Touhig
Baroness Wheeler

Together with the Clerk of the Parliaments.

Michael Winders (Director of Communications), Fehintola Akinlose (Director of Finance and Procurement) and Carl Woodall (Director of Facilities) were also in attendance. David Clark (Head of Education and Engagement) and Abigail Fox-Smith (Director of Visitor Experience) attended for item 4; David Johnstone (Senior Facilities Manager) attended for item 5; and Justin Hills (Head of Property and Office Services) attended for items 5 and 6.

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from Lord Clement-Jones.

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

The Committee had previously agreed the minutes of the 7th meeting by correspondence.

3. COVID-19 Update (S/19-21/48) [RESTRICTED]

The Committee was updated on changes to the operation of the House in response to the pandemic since its last meeting; the provision of papers available to be posted to members had been temporarily extended to include editions of Hansard related to Bills currently before the House and the Commission had agreed to the installation of a freestanding pass reader at Peers' Entrance. The pass reader would be used by members on a voluntary basis with the data used to improve the picture of who has entered on the Estate. There was appetite amongst the Committee for use of the pass reader to be strongly encouraged to take advantage of the security benefits of its installation. The Clerk of the Parliaments would relay this to the Commission.

The Committee recommended to the Commission that catering venues in the House continued to be operated in line with the relevant local guidance when the lockdown ended on 2 December. This allowed for alcohol to be sold where a meal was served in the Peers' Dining Room.

The Committee noted the data on the operation of the Estate.

4. The Response of the Participation Team to COVID-19 (S/19-21/49) [UNRESTRICTED]

The programme of virtual tours and talks had been operating successfully, November had seen the highest level of bookings since the service was launched. There had also been good uptake of themed talks and gift shop online sales were over double usual levels.

The pilot of the Lords Engagement Programme had been extended to April 2021 following positive feedback from members and schools. A *Learn with the Lords: Question Time* session was held with over 45 schools taking part, the previous in-person sessions had only allowed one school to take part.

The Digital Learning Centre was the only online learning platform from any of the UK Parliaments. The Education and Engagement Team had held a session with their counterparts in US Congress who were looking to set up a similar service. The online services had many advantages, particularly widening engagement; September had seen more Scottish schools make use of the Education Service than in the entirety of the previous financial year.

There were no plans to monetise the virtual tours and talks at present; a benchmarking activity was taking place against the virtual offering of other similar venues.

5. Electric Vehicle Charging Points (S/19-21/50) [RESTRICTED]

The Committee had previously considered a paper on Electric Vehicle Charging (EVC) Points in May 2019 at which point the Committee declined to agree to installing the EVC points in advance of R&R. Since then members had expressed renewed interest in making provision for EVCs on the estate, [REDACTED] and the Facilities Department had looked further at the indicative costs and technical specification required. The House of Commons had also started to consider its options for the installation of EVCs.

It was explained that the installation of three EVCs in Royal Court would provide for six electric vehicle parking spaces. As the costs to dig trenches and run the cables was the same for one or three chargers, installing three EVCs offered improved value for money.

It was not possible to simply use a domestic charger, specific works and technology were required to ensure vehicles being charged did not create a fire risk. The Committee agreed in principle to the installation of EVC points in Royal Court. A further paper with detailed plans would come back to the Committee for approval at a later date.

6. Fielden House Refurbishment Project (S/19-21/51) [HIGHLY RESTRICTED]

The project had made good progress, with Phase I enabling works due to begin in January 2021. The contract for the final fit out was due to go out to tender in February 2021. The proposed designs aimed to future proof the building as much as possible, with an open plan floorplate being delivered but with the services and functionality to create cellular spaces if required.

The Committee noted the progress of the project to date and the continued development of the design to meet the approved option 8A of the OBC.

7. Fire Safety Improvement Works Programme Update (S/19-21/52)
[RESTRICTED]

The vast majority of works had been completed; handover of the Basement was expected in December and the Upper Floors at the end of March, following the completion of the commissioning and testing period the Committee had previously been informed of.

Contrary to what had been stated in the paper, Mobility Impaired Persons works had not yet started and were now due to begin in the new year.

The Crown Premises' Fire Safety Inspector had undertaken an inspection in September and had been satisfied with the level of the works.

The Committee noted the update on the Fire Safety Improvement Works Programme.

8. AOB

The most recent Fire Safety Awareness Training completion figures were circulated for the Committee's information.

The Committee expressed its thanks to all staff for their continued efforts to enable the House to continue to operate. The Clerk of the Parliaments would express the Committee's thanks to staff.

Members expressed their thanks to the Chair for his chairmanship of the Committee over the last four years.

The next meeting would be on Thursday 28 January 2021 at 1pm.

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

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