



SERVICES COMMITTEE

Minutes

Thursday 14 December at 12.15pm in Committee Room 2A and on Microsoft Teams

Present:

Baroness McIntosh of Hudnall (Chair)
Lord Haselhurst
Lord Howard of Rising
Lord Kinnoull
Lord Stoneham of Droxford
Baroness Wheeler

Together with the Clerk of the Parliaments.

Andy Helliwell (Chief Operating Officer) was also in attendance. Dan Cook (Interim Chief Information Officer & Managing Director, PDS) and Tim Youngs (Director of Resources, PDS) attended for item 4; Josie Lazenby (Head of Parliamentary Health and Wellbeing Service) attended for item 5; and Dominic Forbes (Portfolio Director, Parliamentary Security Department) attended for item 6.

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from Baroness Deech, Baroness Hussein-Ece, Baroness Williams of Trafford and Lord Clark of Windermere.

Earl Howe attended on behalf of the Baroness Williams of Trafford.

2. Minutes of the 1st meeting, and matters arising

The Committee agreed the minutes of the previous meeting.

The Committee was informed that in the month to 1 December an additional 55 members had completed their fire safety training. The Learning and Development team was exploring options to ensure that those members who complete their training in person rather than online also receive a warning a month before it was due to expire.

The Committee agreed it wished to be updated monthly on the completion figures as part of the Chair's Notices. It requested that efforts be made to provide the usual channels with the names on those who have not completed the training rather than the names of those who have.

3. Chair's Notices S/22-23/88 [UNRESTRICTED]

The Committee received updates on Cyber Security advice and support; Bishops' Bar and Millbank House Restaurant paper; an Electric Vehicle Charging operation update; the new date for the Members' open day and detail on the new pass readers.

The Committee took note of the updates.

4. For information: Digital works: six-month update S/23-24/8 RESTRICTED: SECURITY

The Committee received an update on digital works delivered since May 2023. It also covered some upcoming changes and improvements members are likely to see from the Parliamentary Digital Service (PDS) and Transforming Digital programme over the coming months.

The Committee discussed the following:

- There was confidence that the new Wi-Fi network would be rolled out to members in the first quarter of 2024. This would reduce the frequency with which members were required to log in to the network on personal devices.
- A telephone solution was expected to be delivered in the first half of 2024; an interim upgrade had been provided over the summer to address some of the issues members had been experiencing.
- The new intranet, ParliNet, was now live and had been well received. Online and in-person support and advice had been made available during the transition period. A ParliNet Steering Group had been set up to provide oversight of the development of the intranet as part of business as usual.
- Communications had gone out to all members with cyber security advice and details on the enhanced cyber security support services available to members. Members were able to book a session for personalised advice at the cyber pop-up in the PDS drop-in, in Room 16 First Floor West Front.

The Committee was informed that staff retention in PDS had improved over the last year. Recruitment for the Digital Accessibility team was live, and it would take around 3 months to fill vacancies. The team would be available to give direct support to members.

Changes had been made to the governance processes in PDS to allow the service to be more agile. Business as usual maintenance and updates to systems would no longer require the same governance route as larger, more complex projects and could now be signed off within PDS. New, novel or largescale projects (greater than £10 million) would still go through the full business case process. This new distinction had been working well in limiting delays to projects.

The Committee noted the digital services works update.

5. For Information: Annual Update from the Parliamentary Health and Wellbeing Team S/23-24/9 RESTRICTED: MANAGEMENT

The Committee was updated on the work of the Parliamentary Health & Wellbeing Service (PHWS) from October 2022 to September 2023, and the vision and service priorities for 2023-24. The Committee was also provided with information on services available to members and staff across both Houses.

The Committee noted that PHWS had gone through a number of changes in the last year and was experiencing pressures on the Nurse and GP services, reflective of wider pressures on the NHS. The core services of PHWS had remained the same, but the service was in the process of increasing staffing levels to reflect current demand and its aims for the future.

PHWS aimed to be a proactive service going forward; this included working with the physiotherapist and gym partners; focusing on cardiovascular health and preventing diabetes; and leading on members' lifestyle screenings. The service also aimed to ensure an holistic approach to health, with nurses and GPs prepared to cater to all demographics in the Parliamentary community.

The Committee questioned the availability of Covid and Flu jabs this year. There had been a 2-week window for flu jabs and a series of pop-up dates since then. There were limits on the locations that flu-jabs could be provided due to the need to maintain a cold chain for the vaccine. The Head of PHWS agreed to consider a wider range of locations for the jabs to take place next year. Consideration was being given to the potential to provide COVID vaccines alongside flu jabs next year.

PHWS had been developing better communications to members and staff in order to clarify what services they were able to provide. The Committee noted that the PHWS were also onboarding an advanced nurse practitioner which would widen the scope of what the on-site nurse service could provide. The Committee was informed of the "Your Heart Matters" bus initiative and encouraged it to return in alternative locations such as Old Palace Yard to attract a different audience.

The Committee asked about the new PHWS user groups. There would be two bicameral groups, one for members and one for staff across Parliament, with the aim of working with PHWS to improve services based on user need. The groups were expected to meet twice a year. The next annual update would report on the progress of the groups.

The Committee was informed that there were limitations on the information sharing that was possible between the PHWS and individuals own GPs. Where possible the GP service was used to mitigate this, but as the PHWS was not a registered healthcare provider with the Care Quality Commission there were limitations on what was possible.

The Committee provided feedback on the range of health and wellbeing services for members and thanked PHWS for delivering an excellent service over the year.

6. For Information: Update on Peers' Entrance works and access arrangements S/23-24/10 HIGHLY RESTRICTED: SECURITY

The Committee was updated about upcoming changes to the hoarding at Peers' Entrance, further to the update provided to Committee as part of the Security update on 26 November 2023.

REDACTED. The Committee reinforced the need for continued updates on the works, even when there was no change to planned works. The team had plans for wider communications to be shared with all members immediately after the Christmas recess.

REDACTED.

Once the Victoria Tower project work started, Black Rod's Garden entrance would need to be closed. **REDACTED.** The main impact of the closure to Black Rod's Garden would be on banqueting and events. **REDACTED.**

REDACTED.

The Committee noted updates on Peers' Entrance and commented on proposals for communication with members.

7. For Information: Update on the Education Centre Location S/23-24/11 UNRESTRICTED

The Committee received an update on the status of the Education Centre, ahead of further consideration in February 2024. The Committee noted the intention of the Commons Administration to apply to extend the existing planning permission.

The Committee noted that the current Education Centre location was in close proximity to the Victoria Tower, where works were expected to start in 2024 and the possible Holocaust Memorial site on Victoria Tower Gardens. The Committee supported the important work of the Education Service and ensuring that the service continued to provide opportunities for schools to visit Parliament.

The Committee took note of the update on the planning application, which was expected to be submitted for a five-year extension of the current site and noted that options were being developed for an interim solution to relocate the Education Centre until R&R can deliver a permanent solution, which would be presented to the Committee in February 2024.

8. AOB

The Committee noted that a fire drill took place on earlier in the week. The drill happened whilst tours of the Palace were taking place; Visitor Services reported that the visitors dealt with it well and followed instructions. **REDACTED.**

REDACTED.

At the next meeting, the Committee would discuss the option of having 6-weekly meetings.

The Chair noted that Baroness Deech and Lord Clark of Windermere would be rotating off the Committee early in the new year and this may be their last meeting. The Committee thanked them for their contributions and work on the Committee over the past three years.

The next meeting would be on Thursday 25 January at 12.15pm.

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

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