



## SERVICES COMMITTEE

### Minutes

Thursday 25 January at 12.15pm in Committee Room 2A and on Microsoft Teams

Present:

Baroness McIntosh of Hudnall (Chair)  
Baroness Deech  
Baroness Hussein-Ece  
Lord Kinnoull  
Lord Stoneham of Droxford  
Baroness Wheeler  
Baroness Williams of Trafford

Together with the Clerk of the Parliaments.

Andy Helliwell (Chief Operating Officer) and Fehintola Akinlose (Director of Finance and Procurement) were also in attendance. Mathew Chandler (Director of Estates and Facilities) attended for item 4 and item 7; Stephen Penn (Head of Catering and Retail Services) attended for item 4; Oliver Dixon (Head of the Design Authority) and Luke Winterton (Mechanical Engineer) attended for Item 5; Sarah Kears-Burke (Head of Internal Communications) and Lucy Perry (Internal Communications Manager) attended for item 6; and Justin Hills (Deputy Director of Estates and Facilities) attended for item 7.

#### **1. Apologies**

Apologies were received from Lord Haselhurst, Lord Howard of Rising, and Lord Clark of Windermere.

#### **2. Minutes of the 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting, and matters arising**

The Committee agreed the minutes of the previous meeting.

The Committee discussed the progress of items from the Parliamentary Health and Wellbeing Service (PHWS) update at the last meeting. The PHWS user group was expected to hold its first meeting in February. The Committee would be kept updated on the progress of recruitment of new staff to the PHWS.

The Chief Operating Officer highlighted that following the update received at the last meeting, the date for the first adjustment of the hoarding at Peers Entrance would now be in March instead of February. This decision had been made as it would mean better value for money.

The Committee noted that the new Wi-Fi network rollout was still scheduled to happen in March. There would be communications sent to all members on 30 January updating them on progress.

### **3. Chair's Notices S/23-24/13 UNRESTRICTED**

Notices from the Chair included an update on Fire Safety Training figures; a review of the Independent Complaints and Grievances Scheme; and the publishing of Social Media guidance.

The Chair noted that the fire safety training figures would likely fluctuate between meetings due to the fact that members often undertook training in large groups. The Government Chief Whip added that a large number of Conservative peers had completed their training in January, including all Ministers.

The Committee took note of the updates.

### **4. For Decision: Bishops' Bar – Proposed changes to operation S/23-24/14 UNRESTRICTED**

The Committee was presented with the findings of the meeting held on the 6 December, convened by the Senior Deputy Speaker, to discuss the purpose of the Bishops' Bar and the catering options available. The Committee acknowledged that the proposed changes had already been consulted on at that meeting, and that it was being asked to take note of them.

The Committee noted that the Bishops' Bar food offer and opening times had been aligned with the Long Room. Two staff members were scheduled to be in the Bishops' Bar for the majority of its opening time, particularly peak times. The changes had been in place since the House had returned from recess, there would be communications to all members publicising the changes in the week commencing Monday 30 January. Communications had not gone out sooner to allow the changes to be embedded.

The Committee shared positive feedback on the changes and thanked the Catering team for their work consulting members and pushing forward the improvements. The Committee noted that there were no more major changes to the Bishops' Bar expected before the end of the 6-month review period.

A member raised a question on plans to update the furniture. The Director of Facilities and Estates confirmed that an example of the new chairs would be placed in the Bar in the coming week for members to view and provide feedback on before an order was placed to replace the current seating. Following a request from members the opportunity to provide draught beer had been explored and a trial set up was expected to be in place in the first quarter of the year.

The Committee agreed to the extended opening hours and noted the changes to the Bishops' Bar.

**5. For Information: Thermal Comfort – Heating and cooling on the Parliamentary Estate S/23-24/15 RESTRICTED: MANAGEMENT**

The Committee was provided with a paper which outlined temperature thresholds for both heating and cooling within Parliamentary buildings, as detailed in a new Heating and Cooling Policy. The policy had been drafted and would be maintained by the Design Authority in Strategic Estates. The policy was based on standards set out by the Chartered Institute of Building Service Engineers. The Committee noted that due to the nature of the building, there was less control over non-air conditioned spaces in the summer.

The Committee discussed the potential impact of thermally insulating the windows. The Committee noted that there was currently no policy on the installation of double glazing or secondary glazed windows, but that it would be a consideration for Restoration and Renewal (R&R). There were currently no plans to add secondary double glazing prior to R&R. There were difficulties in installation due to the stonework needing to be reshaped to fit secondary glazing. There were plans for a business case for repairing the stonework in the Courtyards, which could include trials of adding secondary or double glazing. The Clerk of the Parliaments noted the Committee was supportive of such a trial, and confirmed he would bear this in mind when considering the business case.

The Maintenance Team routinely bled the radiators on the estate before winter. The Committee noted that in the event that a radiator does not work it can be reported to the maintenance team **REDACTED**. The Committee raised concern about the effective functioning on fan coil units on the Committee Corridor. The Head of the Delivery Authority agreed to take the matter away and provide an update to the Committee at a future meeting.

The Committee also raised the issue of heating in the Chamber. There was currently a separate project underway looking at the Chamber heating system.

The Committee noted that whilst consideration was given to works of art and the historic nature of the building when setting heating and cooling requirements it was not possible to provide the same level of control seen in a museum or gallery without further significant intervention.

The Committee also noted that the Maintenance Team were looking into ways to increase the efficiency of systems including looking at introducing boreholes to support mechanical heating and cooling.

The Committee asked whether during cold weekends, as had been experienced recently, the heating could be turned on earlier than Monday morning, as the Palace takes a long time to heat up. The team agreed to bring a note back to the Committee. Members on the Committee gave positive feedback on the current heating system and raised caution about spending too much money upgrading it, with R&R on the horizon. The Maintenance team took note of the feedback.

The Committee noted the approach to maintaining thermal comfort on the estate; officials thanked members for their feedback.

**6. For Information: ParliNet – 3 month update S/23-24/16 UNRESTRICTED**

The Committee was updated on the launch of ParliNet, Parliament's new intranet, and its performance in the first three months.

The Committee shared positive feedback on ParliNet since its launch. The Committee suggested that the Governance Forward Planner was an excellent addition but that it needed to be put in an area that is easier to find.

The Committee was assured that the issues when migrating to other Parliamentary applications had been raised with PDS, particularly the member guest booking system for Peers' Entrance. There were ongoing discussions with the Doorkeepers on how to improve it, **REDACTED**.

The Committee asked whether work on ParliNet was aligned with the ongoing work to improve PeerHub. The Committee was informed that the Communications team regularly met with the PeerHub team to ensure that there would be no duplication between the two sites.

The Committee took note and gave feedback on ParliNet.

**7. For Information: Estates Works Update S/23-24/17 UNRESTRICTED (with RESTRICTED annex)**

The Committee was updated on ongoing, expected and completed works on the Lords parts of the estate.

The Emergency Services Network project and the Wi-Fi project would be undertaking visual surveys in offices. These would take place on Monday and Tuesday mornings, but would not be disruptive. These surveys would inform the intrusive surveys which would be planned for a later date. Communications to members would go out before the visual surveys began. A further paper on the intrusive works would be brought to the Committee. The Committee noted its agreement to the non-intrusive surveys taking place.

The Committee was informed that the investigation into Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete (RAAC) on the estate had been completed, and none had been found in the Lords. A pan-parliament statement on the findings of the report would go out soon. **REDACTED**.

The Committee suggested that the Old Palace Yard Window Replacement project considered getting a quote for double glazed windows. However, it was noted that this could mean getting special planning permission, and that there may also be issues with

thicker windows fitting the masonry. The Director of Facilities noted that he would investigate this further and send an update to the Committee.

Committee noted the estate works programme update.

## **8. Any Other Business**

The Committee was updated that there were plans to review the style and structure of the Barry Room. The Committee was assured that the catering team were carefully considering the plans to ensure the offer did not replicate what was currently available in other venues. The Barry Room kitchen was expected to be refurbished in summer recess.

It was the last meeting for Baroness Deech, Lord Clark of Windemere and Lord Haselhurst. The Chair thanked them for their excellent contributions during their time on the Services Committee.

The new members replacing them would be Lord Faulkner of Worcester, Lord Hogan-Howe, and Baroness Stedman-Scott.

The next meeting would be on 29 February at 12.15pm in Committee Room 3A.

**Lola Martin**  
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