

ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE

Note of discussion for the meeting held on 16 November at 4.30pm

[Meeting held over Microsoft Teams as a videoconference]

Members present:

Sir Charles Walker (in the Chair)

Michael Fabricant
Marion Fellows
Colleen Fletcher

Sir Greg Knight
Mrs Pauline Latham
Mrs Maria Miller

Apologies: Mark Tami, Giles Watling

1. Informal Note

The Committee **agreed** the informal note of the meeting on 9 November 2020.

2. Media facilities on the Estate

Alasdair Rendall, Head of Media Relations, Commons Communications Team, briefed the Committee.

Mr Rendall reported that flexible and large-scale options for media facilities on the Estate had been among those discussed following the increased demand of recent years. A consultation of the domestic broadcasters, as well as a round table discussion involving Mr Speaker, had been carried out prior to the COVID-19 pandemic and, while the broadcasters were content with the use of Abingdon Green for the time being, they were keen for alternative space to be found on the Estate in the longer term. The main benefits of using Abingdon Green were its easy access as it was close to the Palace, it allowed flexibility in that equipment could easily be set up there for filming, it had suitable parking space for satellite trucks and it provided an iconic backdrop. He sought the Committee's views on possible locations and on media facilities it thought to be lacking.

A Member said that they were pleased that media facilities were being looked at.

A Member said that an indoor space should be among the list of options eventually put to the Committee for consideration.

Decision

The Committee **requested** that Mr Rendall put together a list of options for media facilities on the Estate to be considered at a future meeting.

3. Fees and charges 2021-22

Malin Eliasson, Director of Financial Management & Performance, and Mostaque Ahmed, Managing Director, Finance, Portfolio and Performance, briefed the Committee.

Ms Eliasson provided some background on the annual review of the House's fees and charges policy and schedule, and outlined the key areas of focus for the coming year. A full

paper would be presented to the Committee, as well as the Finance Committee, at a future meeting and this would help inform the House of Commons Commission in its decision when it considered the policy and schedule at its meeting in December.

Decision

The Committee **noted** the update.

4. Parliamentary Switchboard

James Turner, Director of Customer Experience and Service Delivery, and Sean House, Head of Transformation, In-House Services, briefed the Committee.

Mr Turner provided an overview of the Parliamentary Switchboard Service, following the Committee's request for an update made at a previous meeting. He noted that the paper prompted a larger question as to whether the House was providing the right telephone services for Members at the right time, given that there were several different numbers to contact for different services. Enquiries to the Switchboard tended to be transactional in nature and call handlers provided the information given to them by the House.

A Member said that a customer service style helpline to provide an enquiry as well as a switchboard service would be welcomed by Members. It would also be useful if callers were automatically transferred back to the Switchboard in instances where they were put through to a number and their call went unanswered.

Decision

The Committee **noted** the overview of the current service (and supplier performance).

5. Any other business

Future meeting arrangements

The Committee **agreed** that it would not meet on 14 December or 4 January.

The Committee will next meet on 23 November at 4.30pm.