House of Commons

ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE

Note of Discussion for the meeting held on 22 March 2021 at 4.30pm

[*Virtual meeting held on Microsoft Teams*]

Members present:

Sir Charles Walker (in the Chair)

Michael Fabricant	Mrs Pauline Latham
Marion Fellows	Mrs Maria Miller
Colleen Fletcher	Jessica Morden
Sir Greg Knight	Mark Tami

Apologies: Giles Watling

1. Informal Note

The Committee **agreed** the amended informal note of the meeting on 15 March 2021.

2. Committee attendance statistics

The Committee considered Members' attendance of meetings as at 10 March 2021.

Decision

The Committee **agreed** to publish the attendance statistics on its website.

3. Women and Equalities Committee inquiry on a Gender Sensitive Parliament

The Committee considered its draft submission to the Women and Equalities Committee inquiry on a Gender Sensitive Parliament.

The Chair expressed his support for the Committee's inquiry and in the implementation of its recommendations.

Decision

The Committee **agreed** the submission to the Women and Equalities Committee inquiry.

4. Travel Office Consumer Panel

Marion Fellows, Chair of the Travel Office Consumer Panel, briefed the Committee.

Ms Fellows provided an update on the re-procurement of the Travel Office contract, which was due to expire in August, reporting that the tender return had closed the previous week and the new contract was expected to be awarded in mid-May. The importance of clarity around international travel for committees and Members was raised, particularly for tests carried out abroad for entry back to the UK, and how the cost of tests would be met.

Decision

The Committee **noted** the update.

5. Letter from the Committee on Standards on stationery rules

The Committee considered a letter from the Chair of the Committee on Standards recommending that responsibility for the rules on stationery be transferred from the Administration Committee to the Committee on Standards.

The Chair welcomed the proposal as, given its regulatory role, the Committee on Standards was better placed to oversee the rules on stationery than the Administration Committee.

Decision

The Committee **noted** the letter and **agree** to seek the approval of the House of Commons Commission to transfer the rules on stationery to the Committee on Standards but ask for confirmation that the Administration Committee would still hold responsibility for the commissioning and quality of the stationery.

6. Priorities of the Administration Committee and the House Service

Maria Miller briefed the Committee.

The Committee considered a revised version of a letter drafted by the Clerk to be sent to all Members seeking their views on the Committee's work on informing the priorities of the Committee and the provision of services and facilities for Members.

Mrs Miller said that the letter now included additional questions from the team overseeing the Parliamentary Masterplan to avoid duplication of effort as they also intended to survey Members matters relevant to this work. She also noted that Members should be proactively encouraged to participate in planned roundtable discussions as they would aid in gathering feedback.

A Member suggested extending the response deadline to June given the forthcoming recess and prorogation and that many Members would not be on the Estate during that time. The Chair suggested sending the letters out either on the following Monday or the Monday before the House returned after the Easter recess.

Decision

The Committee **agreed** the letter and the deadline of Friday 7 May for written responses.

7. Request for a room derogation on Upper Committee Corridor

The Chair briefed the Committee on a request from the team carrying out heritage work in Speaker's House, to use a room on Upper Committee Corridor for six months from March to store 40 heritage doors.

A Member asked why the State Rooms in the Speaker's House could not be used to store the doors. The Chair said that they could not be used as conservation work was being carried out there.

Decision

The Committee **agreed** to the request, with the understanding that any future requests were made in writing and with sufficient notice.

8. Meeting arrangements after the Easter recess

The Committee discussed its preferred meeting arrangements after the Easter recess.

Several Members were of the view that meetings should continue to be held virtually until all Committee members were on the Estate as those participating virtually in hybrid meetings tended to have issues with audio and video quality putting them at a disadvantage to those physically present in the meeting room. A Member suggested continuing with the current arrangement until June or until proxy voting had ended and the Speaker, following the advice of Public Health England, had advised a return to the Estate. Another Member suggested continuing to hold virtual meetings until September. The Chair proposed that the current arrangement be continued until early June, when it would be reviewed.

Decision

The Committee **agreed** to continue to meet virtually until early June, when meeting arrangements would be reviewed.

The Committee will next meet on 19 April 2021 at 4.30pm