



SERVICES COMMITTEE

Minutes

Thursday 15 July at 1pm on Microsoft Teams

Present:

Lord Touhig (Chair)
Lord Ashton of Hyde
Lord Borwick
Lord Clark of Windermere
Lord Clement-Jones
Baroness Deech
Lord Judge
Lord Stoneham of Droxford
Baroness Wheeler

Together with the Clerk of the Parliaments.

Michael Winders (Director of Communications), Fehintola Akinlose (Finance and Procurement Director) and Carl Woodall (Director of Facilities) were also in attendance. Matt Korris (Clerk of the Table Office) attended for item 5; Amy Baxter (Head of Education & Engagement) and Abigail Fox-Smith (Director of Visitor Experience) attended for item 6; Beverley Weston (Director of Capital Investment, IHSE), Daniel Walder (BDP), Jo Merry (Design Manager) and Georgina Vlasveld (Design Manager) attended for item 7; Richard Longley (Head of Construction, In-House Services and Estates) and Christine Evans (Programme Manager, In-House Services and Estates) attended for item 8 and; Justin Hills (Head of Office and Property Services) attended for items 9 and 10.

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from Baroness Morris of Bolton

2. Minutes of the 2nd meeting, and matters arising

The Committee agreed the minutes of the previous meeting. It was expected that the Restoration and Renewal (R&R) team would be returning to the Committee following engagement with the Administration Committee in the Commons. A copy of the note of the Committee's discussion on the R&R Design Assumptions had been circulated to the Commission and would be circulated to the Committee for information.

3. Notices from the Chair S/21-22/17 [RESTRICTED]

The Committee welcomed the updates and recommended that the details of the hybrid meeting rooms be communicated to members.

The Chair took the opportunity to thank Loraine Midda, Head of Members Services – Lords, for all her hard work and service ahead of her retirement next week. The Committee Clerk, Gabby Longdin, would be moving on to a new role: the Chair thanked her for her support of the Committee.

4. COVID-19 Update S/21-22/18 [RESTRICTED]

Since the report had been circulated the Commission had taken a number of decisions about the operation of the Estate from 19 July and the return of the House in September. These decisions had been communicated to members by the Lord Speaker.

At present it was not anticipated that additional catering venues would be open during the September sitting, this would be kept under review and it would be possible to re-open venues at short notice if required. The cafeteria in the basement of Millbank House would not open during the September sitting due to the impact of the flood prevention works but the kiosk on the ground floor would remain open.

The Committee took note of the update.

5. Hybrid Facilities in the Moses Room S/21-22/19 [RESTRICTED]

Further discussions had taken place since the paper was circulated and it had been confirmed that it was possible to install the hybrid technology in the Moses Room without having to go under the floorboards. Following the decommissioning of Committee Rooms 2a and 3a, currently being used for hybrid Grand Committee, part of the equipment would be re-used and installed in the Moses Room.

The set up would allow for two to three virtual participants for each item of business and would be controlled from the Lords Committee Control Room. If required, for business continuity, a full control room could be installed in Committee Rooms 2a and 3a and wider remote participation would be possible.

The Committee was supportive of the proposal and agreed to the installation. It was anticipated that the new facility would be operational for the return of the House in October. The Privileges and Procedure Committee would consider the procedural implications.

6. The work of the Participation Team in 2020/21 S/21-22/20 [RESTRICTED]

In the last year there had been no physical visitors to the paid for tours, democratic access tours or to the Education Centre due to COVID-19. Engagement had taken place digitally with the Visitors Services Team putting on a range of digital events, including themed talks and virtual guided tours. The team had also supported socially distanced Divisions in the Commons, work on the Committee Corridor and the on site testing service.

Paid for tours would return to the estate from 28 July with a reduced capacity. Ticket sales had been steady. The challenge for the service going forward would be blending the successful digital programme with the return of visitors in person.

The Education and Engagement Team had moved most of its services online, reaching 75,000 students between September and April. There had been a significant increase in the number of teachers undertaking teacher training over the last year, community outreach campaigns had proved harder. The Learn with the Lords programme had moved online and had seen an increase in the number of members taking part. A member who had taken part commended the team involved.

School visits to the Education Centre would re-start in September on a reduced schedule. Since the dates had been released there had been a good level of interest with all spaces released now booked. As with Visitors Services the challenge would come from balancing the physical and virtual offers.

The Committee thanked the Participation Team for their work and innovation over the last year.

7. Parliamentary Estate Masterplan S/21-22/21 [RESTRICTED]

The Parliamentary Estate Masterplan (the co-ordination arrangements) aims to ensure the business of Parliament and health and safety is at the centre of everything, there are currently around 150 projects ongoing and that work can be disjointed at present. The Masterplan will provide a strategic direction and joined up approach. Having the Masterplan will allow Parliament to be clear on which R&R proposals represent value for money. It was expected that the Commissions of both Houses would be asked to endorse the Masterplan in the autumn, it would have an introduction to the plan later this month.

There was still work to be done on engagement with members more widely on the Masterplan, this was expected to take place after the summer recess. The Masterplan would be owned by both Commissions and would provide a framework for R&R and all projects and programmes to measure themselves against. The Strategic Vision for the Digital Environment forms part of the Masterplan, guiding future decisions of the use of digital and technology on the estate.

The Masterplan had not been costed and did not include hard choices, this would allow individual projects and programmes to explore the options within and outside the parameters it sets and take an informed decision on the detail. It is not expected that R&R will meet all the aspirations of R&R but that the Masterplan will provide a framework against which the options can be assessed.

The Committee took note of the update.

8. Palace of Westminster New Logistics Plan S/21-22/22 [RESTRICTED]

Due to the large number of vital works taking place across the estate, including work on New Palace Yard, this required a new logistics plan in order to manage traffic and

maintain business as usual on the estate. Temporary traffic lights and traffic marshals would be used to ensure traffic could continue to flow in and out of the estate as the works took place.

The new system would be in place for two years but would adapt to the works taking place at any given time, with traffic marshal numbers flexing up and down as required.

Surveys of traffic had taken place to identify key routes and peak times, marshals would be in place Monday to Friday 7am to 5pm. The cost of measures would be split 60:40 between the Commons and Lords.

The Committee took note of the new traffic management plan and the specific impact of works on Black Rod's Garden over the summer recess.

9. Fielden House Refurbishment Project S/21-22/23 [RESTRICTED]

The paper detailed the options for the final fit out of Fielden House, ahead of reoccupation. A steer was required to allow the contractors to begin to prepare for the next phase of works.

The Committee discussed the reoccupation of the building and agreed that the preference was for the future use to be as Administration and decant space, freeing up space in Millbank House for use by members. It was agreed that the Committee would receive a further paper on the number of desks spaces that would be freed up for members in doing so.

The Committee agreed to option 2 for the final fit out; providing a mixture of open plan and smaller offices.

10. Summer Works Update S/21-22/24 [RESTRICTED]

The paper provided an update on the works that would be taking place across the estate over the summer recess.

Members discussed the decision of the Commission to introduce a pass reader voting system and considered their potential location. Some members of the Committee highlighted their support for continued use of PeerHub; the Chair agreed to reflect the views of the Committee at a future Commission meeting.

The Committee took note of the update and requested that details be shared with members before the summer recess.

11. AOB

The date of the next meeting was expected to be 16 September, the Committee would be contacted in the next weeks with further details on the dates for the autumn and how the Committee would like to meet.

Lord Clement-Jones planned to write to the Lord Speaker and Senior Deputy Speaker to request that the Member User Group set up during the pandemic be made official and report into the Services Committee.

Progress had been made on Electric Vehicle Charging Points, capital costs were being finalised and once a final installation quote had been received the business case would be re-submitted to the Finance Director.

Gabby Longdin
Clerk

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