

ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE

Note of Discussion for the meeting held on 12 July 2021 at 4.30pm

[Virtual meeting held on Microsoft Teams]

Members present:

Sir Charles Walker (in the Chair)

Michael Fabricant
Marion Fellows
Colleen Fletcher
Sir Greg Knight

Mrs Pauline Latham
Mrs Maria Miller
Jessica Morden

1. Informal Note

This item was deferred to the next meeting.

2. House of Commons Commission / COVID-19 update

John Owen, Director of Strategic Business Resilience, and Richard Tapner-Evans, Director of Catering Services, briefed the Committee.

Mr Owen provided an update on the next steps in the House's COVID-19 roadmap in light of discussions held by the House of Commons Commission earlier that day and in anticipation of the Government's easing of restrictions on 19 July. Plans to reopen the Estate were proceeding in-line with the roll-out of the vaccination programme so that a phased return of passholders would continue into September, by when all of the passholders who had taken up the offer of a vaccine had received one. It was important, however, for some mitigations to remain in place prior to the rise of the House for the summer to keep the spread of the virus under control and to ensure that the core business of the House could continue to function.

Mr Tapner-Evans reported that the 'rule of six' would end in catering venues from 19 July. The Jubilee Cafeteria would open from 24 July to cater for tours during the summer recess. In addition, seating and table layouts would begin to be returned to their normal arrangements and reusable cups and glasses would be reintroduced in catering venues. Some hygiene safety precautions would remain in place such as screens and sanitizers and marshals would manage queues to ensure that venues were not overcrowded at peak times.

Decision

The Committee:

- **noted** the update;
- **agreed** that Upper Waiting Hall exhibitions should resume from October, with the ballot opening in September for exhibitions in spring 2022 (January to Easter);
- **agreed** that exhibition corner should open to exhibitions by in-house departments from September 2021; and

- **agreed** that it would meet virtually on 19 July.

3. Summer Recess Intrusive Works update

Isabel Coman, Managing Director, In-House Services and Estates, briefed the Committee.

Ms Coman reported on the following works planned for the summer recess:

- Foundations would be laid to support a gantry crane for the refurbishment of Norman Shaw North. The crane would be in place for several years and would have a noticeable visual impact on the surrounding area.
- Pedestrian and vehicular access on the Estate would begin to be impacted by several projects. There was a need, therefore, to better manage the flow of pedestrians and vehicles on the Estate.
- Work would be carried out to fit the restored clock hands to the Elizabeth Tower, with the east dial fully working from 6 August. The clock faces would be obscured during completion of the works.

A Member asked if the courtyard at Norman Shaw North had been considered as a site for the crane. Ms Coman said that, while several options had been considered for the location of the crane, the chosen location was optimum. Norman Shaw North courtyard was not chosen because it would be difficult to lay the foundations of such a large crane there. The Member asked if a site visit could be arranged for the Committee. Ms Coman said that she would be happy to arrange one.

A Member asked why the work to install charging points for electric vehicles in Speaker's Court (discussed at the last meeting of the Committee) was being carried out on a sitting day, when it would cause unnecessary disruption, and not during the summer recess. The Member then asked for assurances that works to refurbish lifts on the Estate would be carried out during recesses and not when the House was sitting because of the risk that it could impede Members during divisions. In addition, they asked why the works were being carried out concurrently instead of a phased approach that would have seen them undertaken at different times to ensure that there were no unnecessary delays for vehicles entering or exiting the Estate. Ms Coman said that a recess had been the preferred time to carry out the works, but this had not been possible because of other large construction projects planned for non-sitting periods in that area. Work would be completed out of hours and as part of other ongoing works to minimise disruption. She was happy to come back to the Committee to discuss further the impact of the works on Members' access and how they were communicated.

Decision

The Committee **noted** the update.

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