



SERVICES COMMITTEE

Minutes

Thursday 9 December at 1pm in Committee Room G and on Microsoft Teams

Present:

Lord Touhig (Chair)
Lord Ashton of Hyde
Lord Borwick
Lord Clark of Windermere
Baroness Deech
Lord Judge
Baroness Morris of Bolton
Lord Stoneham of Droxford
Baroness Wheeler

Together with the Clerk of the Parliaments.

Michael Winders (Director of Communications), Fehintola Akinlose (Director of Finance and Procurement) and Carl Woodall (Director of Facilities) were also in attendance. Simon Nicholls (Change Projects Lead) attended for item 5; Simon Hankins (Head of Security Operations) and John Bradbury (Fire Safety Manager) attended for item 6; Oliver Dixon (Assistant Director, In House Services and Estates) attended for item 7; Dominic Forbes (Assistant Director, In House Services and Estates) attended for item 8; Justin Hills (Head of Property and Office Services) attended for item 9; Joyce Schoof (Sustainability Lead), Gemma Collins (Head of Design Authority) and Joseph Spinks (Sustainability Co-ordinator) attended for item 10; and Stephen Perkins (Head of Catering and Retail Services) and Mark Hulland (Head Chef) attended for item 11.

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from Lord Clement-Jones.

2. Minutes of the 6th meeting, and matters arising

The Committee agreed the minutes of the previous meeting.

3. Chair's Notices S/21-22/44 RESTRICTED

The Chair reminded members of the on-site GP service pilot in the House of Commons. He suggested asking that participation of the House of Lords in the scheme be reviewed at the beginning of the new year, and the Committee agreed.

The Committee would also be updated at a future meeting on any changes to the process for member sponsored banqueting.

4. Verbal update on Electric Vehicle Chargers and COVID-19

Electric vehicle charging

A draft of communications to members on the options for electric vehicle charging close to the estate had been circulated to the Committee for comment. The Committee requested that the communication made it clear that although the proposal had been rejected as it did not offer value for money, it still wished to consider other options for providing electric vehicle charging on the estate. The revised communication would be circulated to the Committee before it was sent to all members.

COVID-19

In response to the Prime Minister's statement the previous day it was not expected that the operation of the estate would change significantly. A final decision would be taken by the Commission once the written guidance had been published.

5. Members Surveys 2022 S/21-22/45 UNRESTRICTED

The last survey was conducted in late 2019 with the results being collated and presented in spring 2020. The decision at the time was that any action to address the survey should wait until after the pandemic. The Business Improvement and Change team was now looking at conducting the next survey in spring 2022 to allow the outcomes to feed into the next business planning round.

The Committee endorsed the proposed timetable for survey and insight activity and provided feedback on the proposed content of the survey.

6. Method of evacuation following a fire alarm signal S/21-22/46 RESTRICTED

The paper set out plans to alter the method of evacuation of the Palace following the sounding of a fire alarm. The death of Sir David Amess MP had resulted in the threat level for MPs being raised, as such the evacuation plans had been reviewed.

REDACTED

The Committee provided feedback on the proposal focussing on the importance of communication and clarity of message. **REDACTED**. The Committee agreed to endorse the proposal.

7. Security Programme Works Update S/21-22/47 HIGHLY RESTRICTED

The paper set out works in New Palace Yard, Central Lobby and across the estate installing CCTV that would take place over the winter. Measures had been put in place in order to be able to continue for the Palace to operate as normal throughout the works; there would however be some visual signs of the works including the installation of welfare cabins in New Palace Yard.

The paper covered three of the fifteen projects that made up the Security Programme; the Committee would receive a paper on the West Front project, including Peers'

Entrance, in the new year. Although the programme had been set up in response to the Murphy Report the risk and requirements of each project were reviewed regularly and reflected in the works.

The Committee took note of the update.

8. Mechanical, Electrical, Public Health & Fabric Safety Programme update S/21-22/48 RESTRICTED

The Mechanical, Electrical, Public Health and Fabric Safety (MEPFS) Programme was a risk reduction programme and had been required in order to ensure the Palace continued to function until Restoration and Renewal took over the building. All projects in the programme had been identified based on critical need established by survey work.

The Division Bell project would provide resilience to the Division Bells alongside the ongoing maintenance contract which maintained their day-to-day functionality. The works would start in the new year and would continue through to August 2022, including the addition of a second control room.

The Committee took note of the update.

9. Estates Works Update S/21-22/49 UNRESTRICTED

The Committee was updated on works in the Lords parts of the estate. It was expected that the scaffolding along the west front being used by the Cast Iron Roofs Project would begin to be removed shortly, with the area around Peers' Tower due to come down in the second half of February.

The Westminster Hall Lighting project, which had been separated from the wider Westminster Hall project, had begun installing an example of the proposed lighting scheme which would be available to view in the first two weeks of the new year. The project was engaging with Heritage England on the necessary approvals for the full scheme.

Works had started in the Millbank House Basement; and it was expected that the Ground Floor of Old Palace Yard would be reinstated by mid January. The Committee would be kept informed on the remaining floors.

The excavation works on St Mary's Undercroft were required due to subsidence.

The Committee took note of the update.

10. Indoor Air Quality Monitoring S/21-22/50 RESTRICTED

The Committee was informed of proposals to install air quality monitors in Millbank House and I Derby Gate. The work would allow for the monitoring of air quality, which formed an important part of the environmental quality of the building.

The monitors would use the existing building management system so produced no increased cyber security risk. They measured CO₂ levels, dust and pollution. Results would be measures against regulatory standards and industry best practice. Actions that could be taken to improve air quality included: changes to the air exchange system in buildings; changing filters; and looking at furniture, carpet and wallpapers.

Using fixed monitors allowed for long term fluctuations to be tracked: this was preferable to spot checking. The Committee had no concerns about the project proceeding and took note of the update.

11. Allergens S/21-22/51 RESTRICTED

The Committee was updated on bicameral work that had taken place to ensure the Lords and Commons catering services both met the new allergen requirements in 'Natasha's Law'. The Head Chef talked the Committee through the process of adding a new item to the menu and the work that went into identifying allergens, and how customers and catering staff were made aware of them.

The Committee welcomed the work and took note of the update.

12. Forward Work Programme S/21-22/52 UNRESTRICTED

The Committee took note of the Forward Work Programme.

13. Any Other Business

The next meeting would be on Thursday 20 January 2021 at 1pm.

Small sections of these minutes have been redacted, usually for reasons such as commercial confidentiality and sensitive management information.

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