

Management Board

Meeting the Administration Committee's Recommendations Concerning Members' Accommodation: Impact on Departmental Accommodation

Paper from the Parliamentary Estates Directorate

Note by the Office of the Clerk: This paper asks the Board to note that proposals will be put to the Administration Committee on 27 November to address the issue of windowless offices. This work cannot be undertaken until Members have been decanted from the affected areas (2011 or 2012) and will have a significant cost (£6m for the UCC works alone). The Administration Committee will consider proposals for expanded education facilities at the same meeting – the preferred option is the Lower Secretaries Floor. This paper suggests moving Members and their staff permanently into 1 Derby Gate and 1 Canon Row. Staff currently located in these buildings will have to be located elsewhere – in 4 & 7 Millbank and 14 Tothill Street. The paper sets out some options, although these will need to be revisited in the light of the re-alignment of departments. **It would assist this process if the Board could agree its priorities for staff accommodation. In particular:**

- **what priority should be attached to co-locating the Library with the Committee Office?**
- **are there other candidates for adjacency that the Board wishes to highlight?**
- **should departments be challenged to reduce the space that they occupy through application of the space standards?**
- **should office accommodation be open plan unless operational or architectural factors dictate otherwise?**

PURPOSE

1. The Administration Committee's Third Report 2005-06 (HC1279) recommended that:

- no Member or mainly desk-bound staff should be in windowless offices,
- every Member should have sole use of an office,
- the office should be within the secure area of the Parliamentary estate.

and accepted that:

12.5m² was adequate for a Member with 7.5m² for Member's staff, and Members with larger offices must expect to share the room with their staff but should not expect to be able to accommodate more than two staff on the estate.

2. The Committee accepted too the need for decant accommodation to be preserved to allow major projects to progress outside the recesses.

3. To implement these recommendations will require Departments to relocate from Derby Gate (1DG) and Canon Row (1CR) using the newly leased No14 Tothill Street (14TS) and No 4 Millbank (4MB) to achieve the changes.

4. This note summarises the situation and the operational concerns that have been identified and seeks endorsement to the way forward. It compliments a report to the Administration Committee on the Member's accommodation

IMPACT OF REMOVING WINDOWLESS OFFICES

5. The windowless offices are in the:

Upper Committee Corridors (UCC) - 80 Member's offices, half with at best a skylight

Lower Ministers Floor (LMF) – 6 offices

Lower Secretaries Floor (LSF) – 43 desks

6. A feasibility study in 2001 looked into the provision of naturally light offices in the UCC. It concluded that, because of the pattern of the fenestration and the width of the floorplate, the result would be a reduction in the number of offices from 80 to 30. These conclusions are still valid.

7. There is no scope to improve the natural light in either the Ministerial offices or secretarial accommodation. If the 6 LMF offices are replaced in the Palace alternative space is needed for:

- 56 backbench Member's offices, and
- 20 staff desks (23 having been provided in the new larger UCC offices).

Derby Gate and Canon Row are the only two buildings that can meet the requirements. Both would need major work.

ALTERNATIVE ACCOMMODATION FOR THE CURRENT OCCUPANTS OF DERBY GATE AND CANON ROW

8. The vacant space is in;

Tothill Street (2,400m²) No 4 Millbank (2,100m²)

with the largest blocks of occupied space being in No 7 Millbank:

Clerks (3,400m²) Finance and Administration (1,600m²)
PICT (1,700m²)

against requirements, largely based on existing holdings, for

Library (3,900m²) Works and Estates + Finance Unit (1,100m²)
Gym (460m²) Police, Pass Office and Post Room (1,200m²).

9. The Library commissioned a study of their accommodation needs if they were to move. They would want to co-locate the 155 staff in 1DG and the 45 elsewhere. Their consultant used differing space standards to the 12.5m² and 7.5m² but the total of 3,900m² is an adequate tool at this stage. The Library has a significant holding of books in 1DG (mobile racking + open shelves). Even if the current zero-based review produced a 20% reduction 2,450m of shelving would be needed. The floors of 4MB are inadequate to carry this load. Tebbit recommended that the closer working between the Library Research Department and Committee Office should be developed further (paragraph 217). Co-location could be achieved only in 7MB, although book storage and deliveries would be problematic, requiring DFA and PICT and one of the smaller occupants to move elsewhere. Apart from the disruptive affect on these Departments, the cost of the recent tailor-made fit-out of the PICT floor and the limited floor loading capacity of 4MB would need to be brought into the exercise.

10. The relocation of Works/Estates does not present any significant issues. They would fit onto the 5th floor of 4MB, but would need more than one floor of 14TS restricting the scope for co-location seen as important from the Tebbit Review. 4MB would be available earlier.

11. Relocation of the Police accommodation from 1CR presents major operational issues. It is unlikely that they could remain in occupation for the 18 months while the work was underway. Alternative locations would be needed for the Security Control Room, the messing and other social facilities used by the security guards and constables and the operational and support offices. Preliminary consideration suggests that neither 4/7MB nor 14TS are operationally effective locations and it may be that temporary use of 1DG post Library occupation is the solution. A detailed understanding is needed of how the Police's space is used and their requirements. This is underway.

12. The Pass Office and Parcel Office would have to remain at the entrance to the northern estate. It may be necessary to suspend the gym for the duration of the works.

13. All this assumes that the Committee agrees that the reduction in the UCC offices should proceed. If it decided otherwise the exercise does not become much easier:

- the 43 LSF desk spaces would need to be reprovided in 1DG or 1CR,
- Members' decant offices would still be needed using 1DG and/or 1CR,
- the move of the Library either to meet Tebbit recommendations or to free up space would still involve the reallocation of accommodation in the Millbank buildings with some moves to 14TS, and
- the problems of re-accommodating the Police, Pass Office and gym at least while 1CR is refurbished remain.

TIMESCALE

14. The following suggest 2012 as a possible completion date, not the end of the current Parliament sought by the Committee:

- there is insufficient time to plan any major work for the 2008 summer recess,
- although work in 4/7MB and 14TS need not be confined to the summer recesses it will be constrained by the needs of the existing occupants,
- major works are needed to the catering facilities, entrances and security in 7MB to cope with the increased numbers and current legislation,
- the Library could move only in a summer recess – 2009's seems the earliest,
- work in 1CR will take about 18 months, and
- conversion of UCC and LSF is at the end of the chain and over two summer recesses.

ACTION NEEDED

15. The Board is invited to comment. Subject to its views, the next stage would be to define more precisely the requirements of the individual departments on the basis of need, the agreed space standards, and current best practice in office design and layout to try to achieve a better perspective of how the relocation might take place, and operational constraints on the location of the Police, Pass and Parcel Offices.

It would be helpful particularly to have the Board's view on the weighting to be afforded to the issues identified concerning the Library's accommodation (paragraph 9).

A MAKEPEACE
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