

Management Board

Works of Art website: e.commerce

Note by the Director General of Information Services

1. This paper asks the House of Commons Management Board to note plans being developed by the works of art website project board chaired by David Natzler to include an element of e-commerce on the Art in Parliament site, foreseen as a possibility in the original documents, but not until now explicitly endorsed. The proposition has been endorsed by the Web and Intranet Board. The basic idea is that the public should be able to order reproductions of pictures displayed on the website, which would be posted to them on receipt of payment. This is now standard with many museums and galleries and other bodies.
2. Exploratory discussions have begun with tSO to see if they will offer such a service as a contractor, either directly (ie using their own resources) or engaging others as sub-contractors. If those discussions come to nothing it is proposed to engage directly with expert providers, or consider using in-House services. If in either of these cases significant up-front expenditure were required, a business case would be developed.
3. There are several issues likely to arise over the next few months if discussions with tSO prove fruitful, including the **prices** to be charged, preferably at the prevailing rates charged by museums and galleries; and the way any **trading surplus** (likely at best to be modest) is to be calculated and distributed - probably by division between the two Houses.
4. In order to be able to embark on negotiations over the next few months, so that the e.commerce element could conceivably be added either when the whole site is launched in the autumn or soon thereafter, the Board's assent is sought now to
 - (a) the overall outline proposition;
 - (b) the proposition that prices should seek at least to cover any costs and possibly produce a modest return; and
 - (c) the outline proposal that any trading surplus be divided between the 2 Houses reflecting the respective ownership of the items pictures of which have been sold.
5. A similar paper is being put to the House of Lords Management Board.

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