



HOUSE OF LORDS COMMISSION

Minutes

Wednesday 12 February 2020

Attendance

- Lord Speaker (Chairman)
- Lord McFall of Alcluith (Deputy Chairman)
- Baroness Doocey
- Mathew Duncan (external member)
- Baroness Evans of Bowes Park
- Liz Hewitt (external member)
- Lord Judge
- Lord Laming
- Baroness McIntosh of Hudnall
- Lord Newby
- Baroness Smith of Basildon
- Lord Wakeham

Ed Ollard, Clerk of the Parliaments, was in attendance.

I. Minutes of Previous Meeting and Matters Arising

As agreed at the Commission meeting on Wednesday 22 January, The Lord Speaker explained that he had written to Lord Maginnis of Drumglass about his non-compliance with security rules. The Commission discussed the response from Lord Maginnis **decided** that the Lord Speaker should respond emphasising the request for an apology and an assurance that he will comply with security rules in the future.

The Commission discussed the broader issue of compliance with security rules and the Lord Speaker explained that a paper would be presented at the next meeting.

The Lord Speaker told the Commission that he had received a letter from Liz Peace, Chair of the R&R shadow Sponsor Body explaining that they intend to continue to commission, oversee, support and fund the QEII decant project as planned unless and until they are formally notified by the Commissions of both Houses that the House of Lords is no longer expected to decant to the QEII Conference Centre for the duration of the Palace works. He said that she had written to Mr Speaker in similar terms.

The Lord Speaker explained that he had spoken with Lord Mance, Chairman of the Conduct Committee about the Code of Conduct and the operation of the Independent Complaints and Grievance Scheme. He said that he had received a letter from Lord Mance explaining the position of the Committee on Valuing Everyone training, namely that members should be encouraged to take part on a voluntary basis

but that if 50% of members had not completed the training or signed-up by the summer recess, they will explore enforcement mechanisms through the Code of Conduct.

The Commission **agreed** that draft minutes are to be circulated within 2 weeks of meetings.

The Commission **agreed** the record of discussion of the previous meeting on Wednesday 22 January with amendments.

2. **Update on Elizabeth Tower Refurbishment Project**

Paper from Ian Ailles, Director General, House of Commons, presented by Matthew Hamlyn, Senior Responsible Owner and Chair of the Project Board for the Elizabeth Tower Refurbishment Project and Charlotte Cloughton, Senior Project Leader for the Elizabeth Tower Refurbishment Project
C/19-21/8 HIGHLY RESTRICTED

Matthew Hamlyn, Senior Responsible Owner and Chair of the Project Board for the Elizabeth Tower Refurbishment Project and Charlotte Cloughton, Senior Project Leader for the Elizabeth Tower Refurbishment Project, presented the paper. Mr Hamlyn provided the Commission with the background to the paper and explained the history of the Project. He said that he was disappointed with the current situation.

Baroness Evans of Bowes Park commented that the project is now £50 million over the initial budget (Outline Business Case figure) and asked what reassurances could be given about the budget for the remainder of the Project. Mr Hamlyn confirmed that no further money would be requested and that he would resign as Senior Responsible Owner of the Project should more money be requested. Mr Hamlyn confirmed that the project would finish and hand back to the business in 2021.

Mr Hamlyn explained that those leading and delivering the Project now had much clearer understanding of the remaining scope of the project and that they were able to price the remaining works more accurately.

A discussion took place about the type of contract underpinning the project and questions were asked about who bore the majority of the financial risk. In response to a question about why the budget had increased but the timescale had not, Mr Hamlyn explained that a healthy time contingency had been factored in at the start of the Project. Mathew Duncan suggested that a healthy cost contingency should also have been agreed. The Lord Speaker asked if there would be an independent review into the management of the Elizabeth Tower Refurbishment Project. Mr Hamlyn explained that there would be an Assurance Gateway Review and a review of the operation of the New Engineering Contract.

Baroness Doocey told the Commission that the Finance Committee had been scrutinising the Elizabeth Tower Refurbishment Project on an ongoing basis. In their assessment the Project had been well managed at an operational level, even if the contract had not been. She commented that the two major problems identified were Parliament's capability to deliver large projects and the absence of initial survey work.

Liz Hewitt asked for more information on the outstanding tasks, the costs associated with these tasks and the timetable for the completion of each one. Mr Hamlyn said that he would provide these details in writing. Lord Newby asked about the respective roles of the Senior Responsible Owner and the Project Board.

A discussion took place about the communications approach and the Commission agreed that the House of Commons should lead. Mr Hamlyn also explained that the Project team were pro-actively engaging journalists by offering tours and background information.

The Commission **noted** the request to the Accounting Officers for additional funding and the reasons for it and **endorsed** the communications approach outlined in the paper. They also requested that the press release be circulated to all members of the House on publication.

3. R&R Quarterly Report (October-December 2019)

Paper from Sarah Johnson, CEO, R&R shadow Sponsor Body
C/19-21/6 HIGHLY RESTRICTED

Sarah Johnson CEO of the R&R shadow Sponsor Body introduced the paper.

Baroness McIntosh of Hudnall asked if the R&R visual presentation which was being displayed in Portcullis House could be replicated at the House of Lords end of the Estate. Ms Johnson agreed that it could.

Liz Hewitt questioned a RAG status discrepancy in the Quarterly Report. Ms Johnson acknowledged this and said that it had been included in error.

On the Northern Estate Project Outline Business Case Baroness Smith of Basildon asked for further details of the differential costs associated with a 2025 completion scenario and a 2027 completion scenario. Ms Johnson agreed to provide further details in writing.

The Commission **noted** the Quarterly Report.

4. House of Lords Decant Project: Proposed location of Chamber, Committees and Catering functions

Paper from Andy Piper, Design Director, R&R Programme Delivery Team
C/19-21/7 HIGHLY RESTRICTED

Andy Piper, Design Director in the R&R Programme Delivery Team, presented the paper with James Baker, Lead QEII Architect, BDP.

Mr Piper presented a series of floorplans and cross sections of the QEII Conference Centre and described the various options for the location and dimensions of the chamber, committee rooms and catering spaces. He also showed a short video simulation of the interior of the building. Lord Laming explained that the Services Committee had already considered the matter and had endorsed the preferred options as outlined in the paper, in particular the ground floor location of the chamber.

Baroness Doocey asked for more details on the costs associated with the storage of Lords historic furniture during decant. Mr Piper agreed to provide further details. Questions were asked about the plans for member engagement and Lord Laming explained that the Services Committee would be taking this forward after Easter. Baroness McIntosh asked if the short video simulation of the interior of the building could be displayed on a loop somewhere at the House of Lords end of the Estate. Lord Laming and Mr Piper agreed to look at this as part of the member engagement work.

The Commission considered and **agreed** the preferred options, as outlined in the paper, for the location of the chamber, committee rooms and catering functions in the QEII Conference Centre during decant.

5. Medium Term Financial Plan 2020/2021-2022/2023

Paper from Jonathan Smith, Head of Finance, presented with Fehintola Akinlose, Finance Director
C/19-21/11 HIGHLY RESTRICTED

Fehintola Akinlose, Finance Director, and Jonathan Smith, Head of Finance, presented the paper. Mr Smith explained that, at their meeting on 3 February, the House of Commons Commission had not agreed the R&R Sponsor Body Estimate.

Baroness Doocey explained that the Finance Committee had already considered this paper. Baroness McIntosh of Hudnall questioned the risk associated with deferring agreement of the R&R-related portion of the budget. Baroness Evans suggested that the Commission request a joint meeting with the House of Commons Commission to come to a common position. The Commission **agreed** to make such a request.

After discussion, the Commission:

- **agreed** that the financial remit should be suspended and reviewed in the 2020-21 financial year to inform the next financial planning round;
- **agreed** the Finance Committee recommendation that:
 - the grants to BGIPU and BIPA be increased by 1%;
 - the grant to BAPG be increased by 2% for its core activities (and a one-off addition relating to attending the US National Party Conventions in 2020-21);
 - the grant to CPA UK be increased by 2%; and
 - the grant to History of Parliament Trust be frozen for three years from 2020-21 and the 70/30 funding arrangement between the Commons and the Lords restored.
- **agreed** the House of Lords budget for 2020-21 of £208.1m, comprising of a resource budget of £141.0m and capital budget of £67.1m, but in the light of the decision of the House of Commons Commission, **deferred** approval of the R&R Sponsor Body budget for 2020-21 of £89.1m; and
- **deferred** approval of all the other elements of the Medium-Term Financial Plan.

6. Members Finance Scheme

Paper from Jonathan Smith, Head of Finance
C/19-21/12 HIGHLY RESTRICTED

Jonathan Smith, Head of Finance, presented the paper.

After discussion, the Commission:

- **noted** that some Members have utilised the revised scheme for European travel on Parliamentary business and that a full review will be done later in 2020;
- **agreed** that no further changes are made to the financial support in relation to travel on Parliamentary business;
- **agreed** that Members are able to claim the reduced daily allowance for work relating to the Education Service when the House is not sitting;
- **agreed** the current wording in the Guide on “swearing in days” at the start of a Parliament remain, that Members may not claim merely for watching other members take the Oath; and that an exception be made in respect of Deputy Speakers on the Woolsack and the Bishop reading prayers;
- **agreed** that current eligibility rules for the reduced daily allowance in relation to Parliamentary Delegations should remain unchanged;
- **noted** that the daily allowance and reduced daily allowance will increase in line with the increase in MPs’ pay from 1 April 2020; and
- **noted** that an updated version of the *Guide to Financial Support for Members* would be published shortly.

7. Rules on Members’ Staff Passes: Revised Proposals

Paper from the Lord McFall of Alcluith, Senior Deputy Speaker, and Tom Wilson, Registrar of Lords’ Interests
C/19-21/9 HIGHLY RESTRICTED

Tom Wilson, Registrar of Lords’ Interests, presented the paper. Mr Wilson informed the Commission that there had been two drop-in sessions for Members in July 2019 and January 2020 to discuss the rules on members’ staff passes but that the majority of feedback from Members had related to the rules on passes being issued to individuals working with APPGs.

On Members’ staff passes, the Commission **agreed** to remove the words “on a regular and frequent basis” from the draft report, instead inserting words to the effect of “Members may only sponsor a pass for an individual if the absence of such a pass would make it impossible for the individual to support the member effectively”. On APPG staff passes, the Commission **agreed** to reaffirm the wording in the previous report that Members may not sponsor a pass for anybody whose primary role is to support an APPG, but that options for a review of the general policy should be explored.

The Commission **agreed** that Lord McFall of Alcluith would discuss the possibility of a bicameral review of APPGs with Mr Speaker. Following this, the Commission **requested** a revised draft report for agreement by correspondence.

8. A New Communications and Engagement Strategy
Paper from Michael Winders, Director of Communications
C/19-21/10 HIGHLY RESTRICTED

The Commission **deferred consideration** of this item to a future meeting.

9. Update on the Administration
Ed Ollard, Clerk of the Parliaments
C/19-21/13 HIGHLY RESTRICTED

Ed Ollard, Clerk of the Parliaments, presented the paper.

The Commission **noted** the paper.

10. Any Other Business

The Lord Speaker explained that he had been approached by two Members about the possibility of financial and secretarial support for the growing number of non-affiliated Members. After discussion the Commission decided not to consider further the provision of such support. Lord McFall told the Commission that he would investigate the matter of non-affiliated Members and select committee appointments.

[More Information – Restricted Access].

11. Next meeting

The Lord Speaker thanked Commission members and informed them that the next meeting would take place on 25 March 2020 at 10.30am in his Room, pending the arrangements for the joint meeting with the House of Commons Commission.

Wednesday 12 February 2020

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