



HOUSE OF LORDS COMMISSION

Minutes

Monday 22 June 2020

Attendance

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

The meeting was held via Microsoft Teams. Ed Ollard, Clerk of the Parliaments, was in attendance.

1. Minutes and Matters Arising

The Commission agreed the records of discussions of the meetings of the House of Lords Commission of 22 May and 6 June.

2. Review of the Temporary Allowance Scheme

Paper by Ed Ollard, Clerk of the Parliaments
C/19-21/39 HIGHLY RESTRICTED

The Clerk of the Parliaments introduced the paper and explained the main proposals for change in the short term. He added that the section on changes in the medium term provided a platform on which to have a discussion but that there were no firm proposals in this area.

Lord McFall of Alcluith asked a question about Members who attend Westminster prior to confirmation that they had been included on a speakers' list and asked if they could claim travel expenses even if they did not participate. The Clerk of the Parliaments confirmed that they could not, and the Commission agreed that this should not change.

After discussion, the Commission **agreed** that:

- Further to the decision of the Commission of 22 May regarding the various forms of parliamentary business, meetings and engagement, whether physical

or virtual, which qualified Members to claim the reduced daily allowance under the resolution of 6 May 2020, participation – whether physical or virtual – in formal meetings of the Steering Group for Change qualified Members for the allowance and that this should apply in respect of participation on or after 8 June;

- Members who are not authorised to be on the Floor of the Chamber or Steps of the Throne should not be able to claim travel expenses;
- physical attendance at Committees under Standing Order 65¹ should not give rise to eligibility for the reduced daily allowance, unless the member attends at the invitation of the Chair, and that eligibility for travel expenses should follow eligibility for the allowance;
- designated Deputy Leaders of the main parties should be eligible for the allowance in the same way as Leaders and whips; and
- further to the discussion at the meeting of 8 June, eligibility for the allowance should be extended to all those who are on a speakers' list for the relevant item of business and had not subsequently withdrawn from the list, that this should apply in respect of participation on or after 8 June, and that the criteria for eligibility should be defined as follows:
 - a) Members who are on the final issue of Today's List and who are either:
 - i. present in the Chamber, as verified by the Clerk at the Table or Doorkeepers, or
 - ii. present on the Zoom call at the start of proceedings, as verified by the clerk in the broadcasting Hub;
 - b) Members participating virtually who are due to speak but experience technical difficulties before they are called, for example a dropped connection or a failure to unmute, and are as a result unable to contribute; and
 - c) Members who speak in Business of the House and other formal motions, advance notice of which is not required.

On changes to the system in the medium term, Baroness Smith of Basildon suggested that parity should be retained for those participating physically and those participating remotely. In the light of the increased volume of work being carried out by Members, she suggested that the Commission should restore the full allowance of £323 at some stage in the near future. Lord McFall of Alcluith agreed. [*Restricted Access – more information*]. He said that the Commission should agree a roadmap for the return to the normal allowance system. The Leader of the House agreed with the suggestion that the Commission should agree a return to the normal allowance system and said that this should accompany the change in messaging about being present in Westminster, an increased workload and the return to a more normal way of

¹ “at a Select Committee of the House any Lord, though not of the Committee, is not excluded from coming in and speaking, but he must not attend any meeting while the Committee deliberate, unless invited by the Committee to do so, and he must not vote.”

working. Lord Newby agreed and suggested that the Commission should consider a return to the practice of recording attendance in the chamber as the principal qualifier for the allowance. Lord Judge suggested that the Commission reflect on the definition of 'participation' and pay particular attention to how 'remote participation' would be defined after the summer recess. Other points raised included:

- The need to pay close attention to the public health situation and the ability to be flexible should this change;
- The position of Members who are over the age of 70 [*Restricted Access – More information*].

After discussion, the Commission **agreed** in principle that from September, access to the previous full allowance for participation should be restored on a basis to be agreed. A paper setting out the options in more detail would be considered at the next meeting on Friday 26 June.

3. Any Other Business

The Lord Speaker thanked Commission members for **agreeing** the R&R funding for the rest of the 2019/20 financial year (Q2-Q4) by correspondence as set out below (paper C/19-21/37, *Restoration and Renewal Programme: Funding for July 2020 to March 2021 and Annual Estimate for 2020/21*). The Commission:

- **Noted** that the R&R Programme's plans for 2020/21 had been amended in response to the evolving Coronavirus/Covid-19 pandemic and in the light of the strategic review of the R&R Programme;
- **Agreed** funding for the R&R Programme for July 2020 to March 2021 of £98.7m;
- **Noted** that, taken together with previously-approved funding for April to June 2020 of £27.5m, the R&R Sponsor Body Estimate for the first Annual Estimate for the R&R Programme was £126.2m, and that this is considered to be the initial Phase I Expenditure Limit which would be subject to variation as set out in Schedule 4 to the 2019 Act; and
- **Noted** that a Supplementary Estimate of £98.7m for the R&R Programme would be laid during the 2019/20 Financial Year, and provision would be made to repay the advance from the Contingencies Fund in the meantime.

4. Next meeting

The Lord Speaker informed Commission members that the next meeting would take place via Microsoft Teams on Friday 26 June at 10.30am.

Monday 22 June 2020

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