



HOUSE OF LORDS

Liaison Committee

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2nd Report of Session 2019–21

# **New special inquiry committees 2020–21**

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### *Liaison Committee*

The Liaison Committee advises the House on the resources required for select committee work and allocates resources between select committees; reviews the select committee work of the House; considers requests for *ad hoc* committees and reports to the House with recommendations; ensures effective co-ordination between the two Houses; and considers the availability of Lords to serve on committees.

### *Membership*

The Members of the Liaison Committee are:

[Lord Bradley](#)

[Lord Davies of Oldham](#)

[Baroness Hayter of Kentish Town](#)

[Earl Howe](#)

[Lord Judge](#)

[Lord Lang of Monkton](#)

[Lord Low of Dalston](#)

[Lord McFall of Alcluith](#) (Chair)

[Lord Smith of Hindhead](#)

[Lord Tyler](#)

[Baroness Walmsley](#)

### *Declaration of interests*

See Appendix 1.

A full list of Members' interests can be found in the Register of Lords' Interests:

<http://www.parliament.uk/mps-lords-and-offices/standards-and-interests/register-of-lords-interests>

### *Publications*

All publications of the Committee are available at:

<http://www.parliament.uk/lords-liaison>

### *Parliament Live*

Live coverage of debates and public sessions of the Committee's meetings are available at:

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### *Further information*

Further information about the House of Lords and its Committees, including guidance to witnesses, details of current inquiries and forthcoming meetings is available at:

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/lords>

### *Committee staff*

The staff who worked on this inquiry were Philippa Tudor (Clerk), Lucy Molloy (Research Assistant) and Heather Fuller (Committee Assistant).

### *Contact details*

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Evidence is published online at <https://committees.parliament.uk/work/440/special-inquiry-committee-proposals-202021/> and available for inspection at the Parliamentary Archives (020 7219 3074).

Q in footnotes refers to a question in oral evidence.



# New special inquiry committees 2020–21

## INTRODUCTION

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1. In response to our call for proposals for new special inquiry (formerly *ad hoc*) committees in 2020–2021, we received a total of 24 submissions from members of the House, consistent with the large number of responses received in previous years. In April we were due to undertake our regular process of shortlisting these proposals, a number of which made reference to COVID-19, with a view to recommending four new special inquiry committees. In late March and early April, however, several members of the Liaison Committee suggested that the usual special inquiry process be ‘paused’, in order to allow a degree of re-focusing upon the present situation. It was suggested that there should be a re-orientation of our scrutiny work to take account of current circumstances. Separately, a number of other members of the House suggested that some committee resource should be dedicated to scrutiny of the Government response to COVID-19, and to understanding the wider and longer-term impacts for the economy, society, technology and international relations.
2. In response, in our 1st report we proposed the establishment of a committee to scrutinise the long-term implications of the COVID-19 pandemic on the economic and social wellbeing of the United Kingdom. This committee has now started its work and is expected to report for the first time before the end of 2020.
3. The Liaison Committee reconvened in June to consider the proposals we received this year, all of which were published online on 17 June 2020. The titles of these proposals are listed in Appendix 2, and the full text of the proposals is available at: <https://committees.parliament.uk/publications/1519/documents/13950/default/>.
4. We considered all the proposals received in accordance with our published criteria for selection, as follows:
  - Makes best use of the knowledge and experience of Members of the House;
  - Complements the work of Commons departmental select committees;
  - Addresses areas of policy that cross departmental boundaries; and
  - The activity proposed should be capable of being confined to one session.
5. As is the case each year, we had difficult choices to make. In light of the high demands placed upon staffing resources by the need to support hybrid Chamber proceedings during the COVID-19 pandemic we agreed, at this stage, to select two new special inquiry committees, to begin their work as soon as possible. We are grateful to all those members who put forward their proposals, in many cases clearly putting a considerable amount of effort into doing so.

6. Following feedback received as part of the review of House of Lords investigative and scrutiny committees, we introduced several changes to the process of special inquiry topic selection, with a view to increasing transparency. These changes include:
  - Changing the name of committees from *ad hoc* to special inquiry committees.
  - The introduction of a template for proposals. The template included six questions with the aim of aiding members to structure their submissions and to provide a degree of equality across those received.
  - Publishing all submissions received online.
  - Inviting the members whose proposals were shortlisted by the Committee to provide further detail about their proposal in a public evidence session. This session took place on 13 July 2020, when we heard from Lord Moynihan on his proposal for a National Plan for Sport and Recreation committee, from Lord Ravensdale and Lord Browne of Ladyton on their combined proposal for a Net Zero Carbon emissions by 2050 committee, and from Lord Rees of Ludlow on a Risk Assessment and Risk Planning committee. A transcript of this meeting has been prepared.<sup>1</sup>
7. This report sets out our recommendations to the House as to the subjects of the two new special inquiry Committees.

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1 [QQ 1–17](#)

## NATIONAL PLAN FOR SPORT AND RECREATION COMMITTEE

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8. Lord Moynihan proposed a special inquiry committee to examine the current state of sport and recreation policy in the UK and consider the creation of a National Plan for Sport and Recreation.
9. Sport has a positive impact on the economy, health and society. Despite this fact, between mid-November 2018 and mid-November 2019, just over six in 10 adults (28.6 million) in England achieved 150 minute or more of activity a week.<sup>2</sup> More recently, research has shown that physical activity among adults has decreased by a quarter since the coronavirus ‘lockdown’ came into effect.<sup>3</sup>
10. The UK Government has adopted a non-interventionist approach to sport and there is no general law of sport.<sup>4</sup> Instead, non-departmental public bodies decide which organisations, sports or types of activity require funding, with the Government setting “high level policy that guides how public money is invested”.<sup>5</sup> The role of Government in regulation of individual sports is limited, with responsibilities lying principally with autonomous national governing bodies.<sup>6</sup>
11. Sport England is the non-departmental public body which is responsible for growing and developing grassroots sport and getting more people active across England.<sup>7</sup> In 2018–19, it invested £260 million of National Lottery and Exchequer funding into a variety of projects and programmes. However, it describes itself as “more than just a bank” stating that it offers a variety of services, including support in the areas of facilities, planning and safeguarding.<sup>8</sup>
12. UK Sport is the non-departmental public body responsible for investing in Olympic and Paralympic sports (it has no direct involvement in community or school sport).<sup>9</sup> It is also the lead government agency for major sporting events and invests lottery funding to “enable the bidding and staging of strategically important international sporting events to be hosted in the

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2 Sport England, *Active Lives Adult Survey November 2018/19 Report* (April 2020) p 5: [https://sportengland-production-files.s3.eu-west-2.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/2020-04/Active%20Lives%20Adult%20November%202018-19%20Report..pdf?BhkAy2K28pd9bDEz\\_NuisHl2ppuqJtpZ](https://sportengland-production-files.s3.eu-west-2.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/2020-04/Active%20Lives%20Adult%20November%202018-19%20Report..pdf?BhkAy2K28pd9bDEz_NuisHl2ppuqJtpZ) [accessed 20 July 2020]

3 Rob Knight, ‘Coronavirus: Adult physical activity falls by a quarter since lockdown’, *Independent* (8 May 2020): <https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/health-and-families/coronavirus-lockdown-physical-activity-reduced-exercise-weight-a9505411.html> [accessed 20 July 2020]

4 Centrefield LLP, ‘Sports law in the United Kingdom’, *Lexology* (21 March 2019): <https://www.lexology.com/library/detail.aspx?g=7cc100e9-382e-4013-b1a0-8499c6889c0e#:~:text=The%20UK%20government%20has%20adopted,no%20general%20law%20of%20sport> [accessed 20 July 2020]

5 HM Government, *Sporting Future: A New Strategy for an Active Nation* (December 2015) p 12: [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/486622/Sporting\\_Future\\_ACCESSIBLE.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/486622/Sporting_Future_ACCESSIBLE.pdf) [accessed 20 July 2020]

6 Centrefield LLP, ‘Sports law in the United Kingdom’, *Lexology*, (21 March 2019): <https://www.lexology.com/library/detail.aspx?g=7cc100e9-382e-4013-b1a0-8499c6889c0e#:~:text=The%20UK%20government%20has%20adopted,no%20general%20law%20of%20sport> [accessed 20 July 2020]

7 Sport England, ‘Why we’re here’: <https://www.sportengland.org/why-were-here/economic-development> [accessed 24 June 2020]

8 Sport England, ‘How we can help’: <https://www.sportengland.org/how-we-can-help/national-governing-bodies> [accessed 25 June 2020]

9 UK Sport, ‘FAQs’: <https://www.uk sport.gov.uk/our-work/about-us/faqs> [accessed 24 June 2020]

UK”.<sup>10</sup> In addition, it invests in “significant one-off major sporting events” on behalf of the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS).

13. A national governing body (NGB) runs each individual sport in the UK.<sup>11</sup> These NGBs are private organisations that govern sports through the common consent of the sport itself.<sup>12</sup> Both Sport England and UK Sport work with NGBs to support them.
14. In 2015 DCMS published its cross-departmental Sporting Future strategy aimed at tackling flatlining levels of sport participation and high-levels of inactivity.<sup>13</sup> It made several announcements for the future of sport.<sup>14</sup> Sport England responded by publishing a five-year strategy (2016–21) based on the new key outcomes set out by the Government.<sup>15</sup> In collaboration with UK Sport, Sport England also published a new code for sport governance which set out the levels of transparency, accountability and financial integrity that are required from those who ask for government and National Lottery funding.<sup>16</sup>
15. In the next few years, the UK is due to host several large international sporting events, including the 2021 Rugby League World Cup and the 2022 Commonwealth Games. With the 10th anniversary of the 2012 London Olympics also approaching, sport will be at the forefront of many headlines. This could make a Committee on the issue of sport topical and of public interest. In addition, perhaps a focus on inclusion in sports could help highlight recent concerns raised about racism and inequality. Such a cross-cutting committee might examine:
  - (1) What progress has been made in relation to the Sporting Future strategy’s five key outcomes (physical wellbeing; mental wellbeing; individual development; social and community development; and economic development)?
  - (2) What should be included in Sport England’s next strategy (the current one comes to an end in 2021)?
  - (3) What is the Government’s role in delivering sport and recreation, and how does this compare to other countries?

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10 UK Sport, ‘Investing in events’: <https://www.uk sport.gov.uk/our-work/investing-in-events> [accessed 25 June 2020]

11 A list of the different NGBs is available: Sport England, *Sporting Activities and Governing Bodies Recognised by the Sports Councils*, (October 2018): <https://sportengland-production-files.s3.eu-west-2.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/2020-02/list-of-uk-recognised-ngbs-and-sport-october-2018.pdf> [accessed 20 July 2020]

12 Sport England, ‘National governing bodies: The recognition process’: [https://www.sportengland.org/how-we-can-help/national-governing-bodies#the\\_recognition\\_process](https://www.sportengland.org/how-we-can-help/national-governing-bodies#the_recognition_process) [accessed 25 June 2020]

13 HM Government, *Sporting Future: A New Strategy for an Active Nation*, (December 2015): [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/486622/Sporting\\_Future\\_ACCESSIBLE.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/486622/Sporting_Future_ACCESSIBLE.pdf) [accessed 20 July 2020]

14 HM Government, *Sporting Future: A New Strategy for an Active Nation*, (December 2015): [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/486622/Sporting\\_Future\\_ACCESSIBLE.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/486622/Sporting_Future_ACCESSIBLE.pdf) [accessed 20 July 2020], pp 10–11.

15 Sport England, *Sport England: Towards an Active Nation: Strategy 2016–21* (19 May 2016): <https://sportengland-production-files.s3.eu-west-2.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/sport-england-towards-an-active-nation.pdf?zE6hDbFaa9dNK8tRqxP2HuVIM2Ls79HG> [accessed 20 July 2020]

16 Sport England and UK Sport, *A Code for Sports Governance* (October 2016): <https://sportengland-production-files.s3.eu-west-2.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/sport-england-towards-an-active-nation.pdf?zE6hDbFaa9dNK8tRqxP2HuVIM2Ls79HG> [accessed 20 July 2020]

- (4) Should there be a National Plan for Sport and Recreation, or is the Sporting Future strategy sufficient?
- (5) Are national governing bodies held sufficiently accountable, especially in relation to diversity and inclusion?
- (6) If a national governing body does not require government funding, how can it be held accountable?
- (7) Could the UK learn from international examples of sports law, policy and governance?
- (8) What barriers are there to inclusion and diversity in sport?
- (9) What will the impact of COVID-19 be on sport?
- (10) The legacy of the Olympics, and how it could be learned from to improve participation following the 2022 Commonwealth Games.

### **Recommendation**

16. ***The Committee recommends that a special inquiry committee be appointed “to consider the effectiveness of current sport and recreation policies and initiatives, and the case for A National Plan for Sport and Recreation”, to report by the end of November 2021.***

## RISK ASSESSMENT AND RISK PLANNING COMMITTEE

17. Lord Rees of Ludlow proposed a special inquiry committee to consider risk assessment and risk planning.
18. The United Kingdom is at risk from major disruptive hazards which have the potential to cause significant human, economic, environmental and infrastructure damage. These include events as diverse as flooding and heatwaves to terrorist attacks and global pandemics.
19. Emergency planning for natural hazards is legislated for under the Civil Contingencies Act (2004), which puts the onus on local emergency responders to plan for civil emergencies. At a central government level, emergency planning is undertaken by the Civil Contingencies Secretariat (CCS) of the Cabinet Office and published in the classified National Risk Assessment (NRA) and unclassified National Risk Register (NRR).<sup>17</sup>
20. The first stage in producing the NRA is identifying the natural hazards that could impact the UK. Each hazard is owned by a government department, which is responsible for identifying the ‘reasonable worst-case scenario’ for each hazard, and for determining its potential impact and likelihood. This permits comparison of each hazard type for prioritisation in emergency planning. The assessments undertaken by departmental risk owners are compiled by the CCS for publication in the NRA.
21. Previously, a separate National Security Risk Assessment (NSRA) was compiled to compare, assess and prioritise all major disruptive risks to the United Kingdom’s national security. However, in 2019, the NRA and NSRA were amalgamated, allowing for the incorporation of security risks and long-term trends, including how risks will change due to climate change, for example.
22. There are currently 44 committees across both Houses of Parliament involved in scrutinising some aspect of the response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Any inquiry into risk assessment and planning would inevitably consider the assessment of such a pandemic, and so would need to be alive to that scrutiny.
23. In particular, the Joint Committee on the National Security Strategy has issued a call for evidence to examine the main drivers of biosecurity risks to human health in the UK. This includes those from pandemics and emerging infectious diseases, and the call for evidence asks how effectively these risks are monitored and assessed by the UK Government, and by whom.
24. A cross-cutting special inquiry committee could examine the following:
  - (1) The risk identification process. Is the existing process (the NSRA and NRA) fit for purpose to identify risks facing the UK? How is it affected by political pressures and does this pose a problem? Is it led by scientific consensus? Is there sufficient peer review and quality assurance?
  - (2) Risk ownership. How are government departments, local authorities and others brought on board and assigned risk ownership? Do they

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<sup>17</sup> Cabinet Office, National Risk Register of Civil Emergencies: 2017 Edition (September 2017): [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/644968/UK\\_National\\_Risk\\_Register\\_2017.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/644968/UK_National_Risk_Register_2017.pdf) [accessed 20 July 2020]

have the incentives and resources in place to ensure they take sufficient action to prepare for, prevent and mitigate the consequences of risks?

- (3) Future and emerging and unknown risks. How can we ensure that future risks beyond the current political cycle are considered and appropriate action taken on these risks?
- (4) International engagement. Is the UK learning from and providing support to other countries? What role can the UK play to ensure the global community is working together to prevent global risks?

### **Recommendation**

25. *The Committee recommends that a special inquiry committee be appointed “to consider risk assessment and risk planning in the context of disruptive national hazards”, to report by the end of November 2021.*

## APPENDIX 1: LIST OF MEMBERS AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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### Members

Lord Bradley  
Lord Davies of Oldham  
Baroness Hayter of Kentish Town  
Earl Howe  
Lord Lang of Monkton  
Lord Low of Dalston  
Lord Judge  
Lord McFall of Alcluith (Chair)  
Lord Smith of Hindhead  
Lord Tyler  
Baroness Walmsley

### Declaration of interest

Lord Bradley  
*I refer to my interests in the register*

Lord Davies of Oldham  
*No relevant interests to declare*

Baroness Hayter of Kentish Town  
*No relevant interests to declare*

Earl Howe  
*As a partner in a family farming and rural estate enterprise, I declare an interest in the following special enquiry proposals:*  
*Land use framework in England: proposal by the Earl of Caithness*  
*The role of Horticulture: proposal by Baroness Fookes*

Lord Judge  
*No relevant interests to declare*

Lord Lang of Monkton  
*No relevant interests to declare*

Lord Low of Dalston  
*No relevant interests to declare*

Lord McFall of Alcluith  
*Member, Advisory Board, Systemic Risk Company (non-financial interest)*

Lord Smith of Hindhead  
*No relevant interests to declare*

Lord Tyler  
*No relevant interests to declare*

Baroness Walmsley  
*No relevant interests to declare*

A full list of members' interests can be found in the Register of Lords' Interests:

<http://www.parliament.uk/mps-lords-and-offices/standards-and-interests/register-of-lords-interests>

## **APPENDIX 2: LIST OF PROPOSALS SUBMITTED**

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The proposals we received this year were all published online on 17 June 2020. These are available at <https://committees.parliament.uk/publications/1519/documents/13950/default/>. The titles of the proposals are listed below.

- Abortion in the UK (Baroness Tonge and Baroness Barker)
- Children’s wellbeing (The Lord Bishop of Durham)
- COVID-19 and prevention in public health (Baroness Greengross)
- Disabled people and work (Baroness Thomas of Winchester and Baroness Campbell of Surbiton)
- Genome editing (Lord Harries of Pentregarth)
- Globalisation and Biosecurity—risks and benefits for animal, plant and environmental health (Lord Trees)
- Improving foreign language learning in the UK (The Lord Bishop of Leeds)
- Inquiry into the UK’s fulfilment of the duties to prevent and punish the crime of genocide (Lord Alton of Liverpool)
- Land use framework in England—the case for it (Earl of Caithness)
- Live facial recognition technology (Lord Clement-Jones)
- National Identity Cards (Lord Campbell-Savours)
- National plan for sport and recreation (Lord Moynihan)
- Net zero roadmap to 2050 (Lord Ravensdale)
- New home communal assets and rentcharges (Earl of Lytton)
- Reversing Beeching—the case for reopening closed railway lines and stations (Lord Faulkner of Worcester and Lord Shutt of Greetland)
- Risk assessment and risk planning (Lord Rees of Ludlow)
- Social care (The Lord Bishop of Carlisle)
- The problem of “marriages” that are not marriages (Baroness Cox)
- The role and importance of horticulture to the economy, health and wellbeing, and climate change (Baroness Fookes)
- UK’s role in expanding global media freedom (Lord Black of Brentwood)
- These Islands (Lord Soley)
- To investigate the “Crisis of replication” in science and ways of assuring the quality of scientific studies on which public policy is based (Lord Lilley)
- The adequacy and resilience of the Government’s plans to deliver net zero carbon emissions by 2050 (Lord Browne of Ladyton)
- Wellbeing as the guide to policy (Lord O’Donnell and Lord Layard)

### **APPENDIX 3: TEMPLATE SPECIAL INQUIRY SUBMISSION FORM**

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#### **Invitation to Members to submit special inquiry (previously known as *ad hoc*) committee proposals for 2020–21**

On behalf of the Liaison Committee, I am writing to invite members to suggest proposals for special inquiry (previously known as *ad hoc*) committees to start in summer 2020. The deadline for submissions is 31 March 2020.

Special inquiry committees are appointed to undertake a particular inquiry and cease to exist once they have reported to the House. Members are invited to send their suggestions for inquiry topics for special inquiry committees.

In previous years the proposals we have received have ranged from a sentence or two to several pages. In order to provide greater consistency, this year the Committee is again inviting all members submitting proposals to use the headings suggested in the form accompanying this invitation. Copies of the form will also be available from the Printed Paper Office.

Proposals should be sent to the Clerk of the Liaison Committee, Philippa Tudor, in the internal mail or—preferably—by email: [hlliaisoncmttee@parliament.uk](mailto:hlliaisoncmttee@parliament.uk) no later than 31 March 2020.

All ideas submitted by then will be considered by the Liaison Committee using the following criteria for selection:

- Makes best use of the knowledge and experience of Members of the House
- Complements the work of Commons departmental select committees
- Addresses areas of policy that cross departmental boundaries
- The activity proposed should be capable of being confined to one session.

The Liaison Committee expects to recommend up to four proposals for new special inquiry Committees (including a post-legislative scrutiny committee) for appointment before the start of the 2020 summer recess. The current four special inquiry committees have been ordered to report by 23 June 2020, and it is hoped that the new committees will be able to start their work as soon as they have reported.

In reviewing proposals, the Liaison Committee takes into account the criteria listed above. In addition, the Committee may also take into account wider factors such as the balance of topics across the special inquiry committees (including in previous years), the work being undertaken by other Committees and within Government, and the possibility of early legislation on the subject matter.

During the course of this year the Liaison Committee will also be considering the second stage of the review of committees and the appropriate balance of committees following the UK's withdrawal from the EU. I would welcome members' contribution to that debate to ensure that House of Lords committees achieve a strategic approach to future scrutiny needs within a thematic framework.

**MCFALL OF ALCLUITH  
FEBRUARY 2020**

**LIAISON COMMITTEE***Proposal for a special inquiry (ad hoc) committee in 2020–2021*

Note: Following feedback, the Liaison Committee has agreed this template for use by members wishing to propose an inquiry. Members are invited to use it as a guide, and to address each of the questions below. Members are asked to describe the proposal in 100–500 words.

*Title:*

*Name of member(s) of the House making the proposal: [Type here]*

*Description of the proposal (in 100–500 words). If you are proposing a post-legislative scrutiny committee, please explain the aspects of the Act that you think particularly warrant scrutiny:*

*What would the inquiry be trying to achieve?*

*How does the proposal make best use of the knowledge and experience of Members of the House?*

*How does the proposal address areas of policy that cross departmental boundaries?*

*Is the proposed special inquiry committee capable of being completed in one year or less? (For reference, most special inquiry committees hold approximately 20 x 1-hour evidence sessions throughout the inquiry, but proposals for shorter inquiries are also welcome.)*

*Do you have any additional comments in relation to your proposal which you wish to draw to the attention of the Liaison Committee?*

*If you have any relevant interests that relate to your proposal please can you list them below.*

*Please send this form, if possible by email, to the Clerk to the Liaison Committee [hlliaisoncmttee@parliament.uk](mailto:hlliaisoncmttee@parliament.uk), to arrive no later than 31 March 2020.*