



HOUSE OF LORDS COMMISSION

Minutes

Tuesday 6 October 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. The meeting was held via Microsoft Teams.

I. Minutes and Matters Arising

The Commission **agreed** the record of discussions of the meeting of the House of Lords Commission of 15 September. Baroness Evans of Bowes Park, the Leader of the House, asked for the minutes to be circulated to Commission members promptly.

The Lord Speaker thanked Commission members for considering four papers by correspondence:

- *Update on the External Management Review (C/19-21/63)* from Lord McFall of Alcluith, the Senior Deputy Speaker, which was **noted** on Friday 18 September;
- *Independent Complaints and Grievance Scheme (ICGS): 18-Month Review Update (C/19-21/59)* from Ed Ollard, Clerk of the Parliaments, which was **agreed** on Tuesday 22 September;
- *Overseas Travel paper (C/19-21/60)* from Ed Ollard, Clerk of the Parliaments, which was **agreed** on Tuesday 22 September; and
- *Update on the Administration (C/19-21/61)* from Ed Ollard, Clerk of the Parliaments, which was **noted** on Tuesday 22 September.

2. **Update from the Clerk of the Parliaments: operation of the House of Lords and ongoing COVID-19 response**

Ed Ollard, Clerk of the Parliaments

C/19-21/64 HIGHLY RESTRICTED

The Lord Speaker welcomed Professor John Simpson, Head of the Emergency Response Department and Deputy Director of the Health Protection Directorate at Public Health England and Dr Nick Gent CBE, Deputy Head of the Emergency Response Department at Public Health England to the meeting.

Professor Simpson and Dr Gent briefed Commission members on both the national situation and the recent regional variations in the spread of the virus.

The Clerk of the Parliaments presented his paper and said that despite the restrictions, the business of the House and Committees were still being transacted effectively. He said there a small number of cases had emerged on the Estate and were being managed appropriately. He said that there was more to do in communicating the testing provision and the track and trace procedures in Parliament.

[Restricted Access – More Information].

The Lord Speaker explained that the House of Commons Commission had met earlier in the day and that they had agreed, among other measures, to issue guidance ‘strongly encouraging’ everyone on the Parliamentary Estate to wear a face covering in common parts of the Estate and in areas where social distancing is difficult. He invited the Commission members to agree to issue similar guidance so that a joint statement and joint communications could be published the following day.

After discussion, the Commission **agreed** to move in-step with the House of Commons and strongly encourage all passholders to wear face coverings on the Estate in common parts of the Estate and in areas where social distancing is difficult. The Lord Speaker said that he would wear a face covering in the procession starting the following day.

Commission members asked about the threshold for stricter measures being imposed. Dr Gent explained that the measures already introduced were smarter than those available in the previous spike and more conducive to the operation of Parliament continuing.

[Restricted Access – More Information].

Questions were asked about the possibility of a pass reader at Peers’ Entrance for track and trace purposes, The Clerk of the Parliaments agreed to investigate the options for a pass reader and report back to the Commission.

[Restricted Access – More Information].

The Lord Speaker thanked Professor Simpson and Dr Gent and the Commission **noted** the paper. The Commission **agreed** to maintain current restrictions on working on the Estate.

3. R&R Update

Letter from Sarah Johnson, Chief Executive of the R&R Sponsor Body
C/19-21/66 HIGHLY RESTRICTED

The Lord Speaker explained that the letter from Sarah Johnson, Chief Executive of the R&R Sponsor Body, dated Friday 2 October, updated the Commission on the revised timetable for the strategic review and how this would incorporate the additional work commissioned in recent weeks. He also drew Commission members' attention to Ms Johnson's comments on the arrangements for agreeing the Programme's full Phase I Expenditure Limit which would include the funding for the following financial year, and the request that the discussions on that funding begin after the consideration of the initial draft report in December.

Commission members underlined their concern about *[Restricted Access – More Information]* the potential delays to the wider Programme. The point was made that the strategic review may now be seen as an opportunity to develop a do-minimum option, and that the evidence base for the review would be crucial. A number of Commission members asked for their concern to be placed on the record in some way and for the Commission's view to be communicated publicly. After discussion, the Commission agreed to return to the matter at a subsequent meeting.

The Commission **noted** the letter.

4. Refusing Access to the Parliamentary Estate

Fay Tennet, Deputy Director of Security (Operations), Parliamentary Security
Department
C/19-21/58 HIGHLY RESTRICTED

The Commission **agreed** to consider the paper by correspondence.

5. Next meeting

The Lord Speaker informed Commission members that the next meeting would take place via Microsoft Teams on Monday 9 November at 4pm.

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