



HOUSE OF LORDS COMMISSION

Minutes

Friday 22 January 2021

Attendance

- Lord Speaker (Chairman)
- Lord McFall of Alcluith (Deputy Chairman)
- Baroness Doocey
- Mathew Duncan (external member)
- Baroness Evans of Bowes Park
- 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 Lord Speaker thanked the four members who would be standing down from the Commission later that week: Baroness McIntosh of Hudnall, Baroness Doocey, Lord Laming and Lord Wakeham. He also said that following the meeting of the Committee of Selection on Thursday 21 January the House would be asked to agree four new Commission members: Lord Touhig as Chair of the Services Committee, Lord Vaux of Harrowden as Chair of the Finance Committee, Lord German and Lord Hill of Oareford. He added that the recruitment for Liz Hewitt's successor as an External Member was progressing and that the interviews would take place after the February recess.

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

- C/19-12/84 – Paper from the Steering Group for Change, *Interim Report and Progress Dashboard on the Ellenbogen Report Recommendations*;
- C/19-12/85 – Paper from the Clerk of the Parliaments, *Withdrawal of Retired Member Privileges*;
- C/19-12/86 – Paper from the Commission Secretary, *External Member Recruitment*; and
- C/19-12/88 – Paper from the Clerk of the Parliaments, *International Travel*.

On the paper concerning the withdrawal of retired member privileges the Lord Speaker explained that the proposals had been agreed in principle but that the Clerk

of the Parliaments was still discussing a couple of details with some Commission members, namely when the removal of privileges should take place and, in the case of suspensions, for how long.

After discussion, the Commission **agreed** the records of discussions of the previous meetings of the House of Lords Commission of 15 December 2020 and 5 January 2021.

2. Strategic Review of the Restoration and Renewal Programme

Cover Note and Final Report

C/19-21/89 HIGHLY RESTRICTED: COMMERCIAL

Strategic Review of the Restoration and Renewal Programme: Proposals for Next Steps

Paper from Kate Meanwell and Judith Brooke, House of Lords R&R Directors

C/19-21/90 HIGHLY RESTRICTED: COMMERCIAL

Letter from the Speaker of the House of Commons to Sarah Johnson, Chief Executive of the R&R Sponsor Body, 30 December 2020

C/19-21/91 HIGHLY RESTRICTED: COMMERCIAL

The Lord Speaker said that the report was a long-awaited and important document. He thanked Baroness McIntosh of Hudnall for acting as his representative on the challenge panel, alongside the Leader of the House.

[Restricted Access – More Information].

Sarah Johnson, Chief Executive of the R&R Sponsor Body, and David Goldstone, Chief Executive of the R&R Delivery Authority, joined the meeting and presented the final report of the Strategic Review.

[Restricted Access – More Information].

The Lord Speaker thanked both Ms Johnson and Mr Goldstone and they left the meeting.

[Restricted Access – More Information].

The Commission **noted** the report of the Strategic Review of the R&R Programme, the paper from the Lords R&R Directors and the letter from Mr Speaker to Sarah Johnson.

3. External Management Review

Final Report by Keith Leslie, External Reviewer and Liz Mohr, Deputy External Reviewer

C/19-21/92 HIGHLY RESTRICTED

Cover Note from Keith Leslie, External Reviewer and Liz Mohr, Deputy External Reviewer

C/19-21/93 HIGHLY RESTRICTED

External Management Review: Publication and Communication Proposals

Paper from Michael Winders, Director of Communications

C/19-21/94 HIGHLY RESTRICTED

The Lord Speaker welcomed Keith Leslie, the External Reviewer, and Liz Mohr, the Deputy External Reviewer, to the meeting and thanked them for their work on the Review. Mr Leslie spoke about the importance of the implementation stage and the Commission's visible commitment to the programme of change. He suggested that the report be published as soon as possible but cautioned against rushing the initial consideration of the report's findings and recommendations. Mr Leslie and Ms Mohr then left the meeting.

Baroness Smith of Basildon suggested that an additional Commission meeting be convened to discuss the short-term priorities and take initial decisions. Some Commission members said that the formal consideration of some of the recommendations would have to wait until the new Clerk of the Parliaments had been appointed and the Chief Operating Officer had been recruited. On the Oversight Panel, a number of Commission members suggested that it be an advisory body rather than a decision-making body and stressed the importance of maintaining clear lines of accountability to the Commission. On the membership of the Panel, some Commission members discussed the membership and agreed to consider this matter in detail at the next meeting.

The Commission **formally received** the External Management Review report, **agreed** to publish it the following week and the Lord Speaker **undertook** to consult Commission members on the draft communications.

4. 2020-21 Forecast Outturn and Supplementary Estimate

Jonathan Smith, Head of Finance

C/19-21/95 HIGHLY RESTRICTED

Jonathan Smith, Head of Finance, presented his paper and Baroness Doocey explained that the Finance Committee had endorsed the proposals. After discussion, the Commission **noted** the 2020-21 Forecast Outturn and **agreed** the 2020-21 Supplementary Estimate.

2020-21 Forecast Outturn

	Main Estimate £m	Forecast Outturn £m	Variance £m
Resource DEL ¹	140.9	135.7	5.2
Resource AME ²	-	-	-
Capital DEL	67.1	40.6	26.5
Net cash requirement	193.4	163.6	29.8

2020-21 Supplementary Estimate

- Resource DEL – reduced by £5.2m
- Capital DEL – reduced by £26.5m
- Resource AME – increased by £5.5m
- Net cash requirement – reduced by £29.8m

5. Finance Committee Update: Senior Responsible Owners on Category A Projects

Baroness Doocey, Chairman of the Finance Committee
C/19-21/96 HIGHLY RESTRICTED

Baroness Doocey, Chair of the Finance Committee, presented her paper. She said that the paper constituted a general update on the work of the Committee and a specific update on the ongoing work to change the way Category A Projects were overseen. She said that, since she had taken over as Chair in 2017, the Committee had worked hard and had made a number of valuable contributions to the stewardship of public money. Lord McFall of Alcluith said that he and Mathew Duncan would continue the work on Senior Responsible Owners and Category A projects. The Lord Speaker thanked her and Lord Laming for their hard work as Chairs of the Finance Committee and Services Committee respectively and their dedicated work as members of the Commission in the service of the House.

The Commission **noted** the Update, in particular the proposed changes concerning the role of Senior Responsible Owners.

6. Update on the Administration

Ed Ollard, Clerk of the Parliaments
C/19-21/97 HIGHLY RESTRICTED

The Clerk of the Parliaments presented his paper. On hybrid proceedings he explained that the Chamber and Grand Committee continued to be busy and that the Administration had adapted well to the increased demand for virtual participation. On unforeseen technical issues which disrupt the business of the House he said that they were being addressed by the Administration and the broadcasting team but that the disruption caused by such issues was generally resolved swiftly.

¹ Departmental Expenditure Limit.

² Annually Managed Expenditure.

The Leader of the House asked about the inconclusive recruitment campaign for a new Managing Director of the Parliamentary Digital Service and what steps were being taken to appoint someone to the post.

[Restricted Access – More Information].

Baroness Smith of Basildon congratulated the Administration for improving its ranking to 15th in the UK Top 50 Inclusive Employers, the Administration's highest score to date.

On the COVID-19 response Mr Ollard explained that the number of members and other passholders on the Estate had declined markedly since the January restrictions had been put in place but that Member attendance was now beginning to rise. He also said that the number of confirmed cases on the Estate remained in line with case numbers and prevalence in London and the South East more broadly. The Commission discussed the measures and the appropriate advice to Members who had received one or both doses of the vaccine. Mr Ollard agreed to seek PHE advice.

The Commission **noted** the Update.

7. Next meeting

The Lord Speaker informed Commission members that the next meeting would take place via Microsoft Teams on a date and at a time to be determined.

Friday 22 January 2021

Patrick Milner
Secretary to the Commission
020 7219 6644
milnerp@parliament.uk