

HOUSE OF LORDS COMMISSION**DECISIONS**

Wednesday 21 January 2025, 10:00am–12:00 midday
in Committee Room 1 and online

Attendance

- Lord Speaker (Chair)
- Lord Gardiner of Kimble (Deputy Chair)
- Earl of Kinnoull
- Lord McLoughlin
- Alice Maynard (external member)
- Charlotte Moar (external member)
- Baroness Pitkeathley
- Lord Purvis of Tweed
- Baroness Scott of Needham Market
- Baroness Smith of Basildon
- Lord Morse

Apologies were received from Lord True.

Other Members present:

- Lord Forsyth of Drumlean (attending under Standing Order 64)
- Earl Howe (attending under Standing Order 64)

Officials also in attendance:

Simon Burton, Clerk of the Parliaments (*virtual*); Roger Hargreaves, Director, Cabinet Office Briefing Rooms (COBR) Directorate, National Security Secretariat; Andy Helliwell, Chief Operating Officer; Elizabeth Hunt, Director of Restoration and Renewal Boards and Groups; Alix Langley, Human Resources Director; John Owen, Director of Strategic Business Resilience; Chloe Mawson, Clerk Assistant; Charlotte Simmonds, Managing Director, Restoration and Renewal Client Team; and Andy Smith, Managing Director, Parliamentary Digital Service.

1. Minutes of Previous Meeting

The Commission agreed the record of the discussion of the meeting of the House of Lords Commission on 17 December 2025 with redactions.

2. Update from the Clerk of the Parliaments

Clerk of the Parliaments' Update Paper [HIGHLY RESTRICTED]

3. Business Resilience Update

C/24–26/76 [HIGHLY RESTRICTED]

The Commission:

- noted the progress to date on developing resilience and endorsed proposed future work to continue aligning with the resilience framework and national security strategy;
- agreed that further work should continue on developing the logistical capability for a hybrid and or virtual sitting, for use in an emergency;
- agreed to ask the Procedure and Privileges Committee to look at the case for a resilience standing order to ensure the continuity of business in an emergency where the Government advise the House that they do not believe it is safe or logistically possible for a physical sitting to take place within Westminster, or for a physical sitting to take place with the participation of all Members; and
- considered and provided direction on (a) options for relocation arrangements including whether venues need to look like the chamber and whether a detailed out of London plan is needed, and (b) whether detailed planning on how Parliament would operate should be conducted.

4. Audit and Risk Assurance Committee Update

C/24–26/77 [RESTRICTED]

The Commission:

- noted that the assurances provided by the Head of Internal Audit around internal controls have improved to moderate (previously limited);
- noted the ongoing limited assurances around strategic estates, commercial and major project management; and
- noted the continuing concern of the Committee that the House of Lords Administration and bicameral services are not ready to deliver the scale of estates projects which are planned.

5. Finance Committee Update
C/24–26/78 [RESTRICTED]

The Commission noted the update.

6. Services Committee Update
C/24–26/79 [RESTRICTED]

The Commission:

- noted the update; and
- agreed that the Parliamentary Digital Service should work with the Services Committee to explore further opportunities and locations for the provision of in-person digital training for Members.

7. Restoration and Renewal Programme Board: renewal of external members' appointments
C/24–26/80 [HIGHLY RESTRICTED]

The Commission:

- noted the expiry of external board member appointments to the R&R Programme Board on 28 February and 28 September;
- agreed to renew the appointments of all external members of the Programme Board for one year, to provide continuity during a transitional period in which the Programme's future governance and continuing requirements for external expertise will be reviewed;
- noted that a light-touch appraisal is being conducted in connection with the renewal process; and
- considered whether further proportionate steps should be taken to provide assurances of the appointees' effectiveness in advance of any renewal.

Any Other Business

Audit and Risk Assurance Committee Member Appointment

The Commission agreed to the appointment of Lord de Clifford as a member of the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee.

Offensive language

The Commission referred requests to review the procedures around offensive language in the Chamber to the Procedure and Privileges Committee.

Alasdair Love
Secretary to the Commission

Raquel Fernández Vidal and Julicha Vardalia
Executive Officers to the Commission