



## **HOUSE OF LORDS COMMISSION**

### **MINUTES**

**Wednesday 4 March 2026 10:00am–12:00 midday**  
*in Committee Room 1*

#### **Attendance**

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

Also in attendance:

- Earl Howe (attending under Standing Order 64)

Apologies were received from Lord True.

Officials also in attendance:

Simon Burton, Clerk of the Parliaments; Ed Davis, Gentleman Usher of the Black Rod; Christine Evans, Senior Responsible Owner; Mark Harbord, Chief Information Security Officer; Andy Helliwell, Chief Operating Officer; Luke Hussey, Director of Digital Value; Paul Martin, Interim Director of Parliamentary Security; Chloe Mawson, Clerk Assistant; Sarah Rayner, Chief Commercial Officer; 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 21 January 2026, with redactions.

**2. Report from the Clerk of the Parliaments**

Clerk of the Parliaments' Update Paper [HIGHLY RESTRICTED]

Simon Burton, Clerk of the Parliaments, reported to the Commission.

In discussion the following points were noted:

- The search for a permanent Finance Director would likely take place in September 2026.
- The 'top 10' programmes list was useful and should be shared regularly with the Commission.
- An update on the Parliamentary Streetscape project to be provided, including a breakdown of costs. **[Action: Paul Martin]**
- Paper on support for staff during extended sittings to be provided. **[Action: Alix Langley]**
- There was a desire to review the terms of references and delegated responsibilities of the domestic committees.
- The report from the Clerk of the Parliaments should only report on specific projects when there was a need to.

**3. Report from the Interim Director of Parliamentary Security**

Interim Director of Parliamentary Security's Report [HIGHLY RESTRICTED]

Paul Martin, Interim Director of Parliamentary Security, reported to the Commission.

In discussion the following points were noted:

- Historically, the Commission had tended to be consulted at a late stage in the project process. Going forward, the Commission should be consulted at a much earlier stage to enable it to provide strategic direction to projects.
- Security should be weighed alongside other considerations, including public access, cost, aesthetics, and reputation.
- Both Houses were equal partners in security and shared security risk.

**4. Access rights for departing hereditary peers and former members**

C/24–26/81 [RESTRICTED]

Chloe Mawson, Clerk Assistant, introduced the paper. The paper sought the Commission's decisions on access rights for any hereditary peers who may have to

leave the House at the end of this session, subject to the passage of the House of Lords (Hereditary Peers) Bill.

In discussion the following points were noted:

- There should be parity for all former and retired Members.
- There was concern around access rights for all former and retired Members, specifically related to the use of facilities for business, rather than personal, reasons.
- The groups of those entitled to sit on the steps of the throne should not be amended at this time.
- There would need to be clear communications for former members should any rules change.
- Any changes would be accompanied by a report to the House and subject to the House's agreement.

The Commission:

- agreed that, subject to the House of Lords (Hereditary Peers) Bill receiving Royal Assent, hereditary peers who cease to be members at the end of the 2024-26 session should be entitled to the same access rights as members who retire under the House of Lords Reform Act 2014;
- agreed that peers who ceased to be members in 1999 should have their current access rights adjusted to reflect those of other former members; and
- agreed that further work should be undertaken on the rules on facilities and services for all former Members, in consultation with the Services Committee.

**5. Palace of Westminster External Fabric Conservation**  
C/24–26/82 [HIGHLY RESTRICTED]

Sarah Rayner, Chief Commercial Officer, and Christine Evans, Senior Responsible Owner, introduced the paper. The paper updated the Commission on the Fabric Conservation Project.

In discussion the following points were noted:

- *[Restricted Access – More Information]*

The Commission:

- noted and provided feedback on the Fabric Conservation Project.

**6. Report on Digital Services**  
C/24–26/83 [RESTRICTED]

Andy Smith, Chief Information Officer and Managing Director of the Parliamentary Digital Service, and Luke Hussey, Director of Digital Value, introduced the paper. The paper provided the Commission with an overview of, and update on, Parliament's digital services.

In discussion the following points were noted:

- Development of a digital system for administering allowances was in progress. A timetable for testing and release would be set out soon.
- It would be sensible to first focus on the digitisation of daily allowance claims.
- It was important that PDS have a codified dispute resolution and review mechanism.
- It was important that Members receive training in digital, including the provision of a permanent digital drop-in room.

The Commission:

- agreed that work should proceed to digitise the administration of Members' allowance claims;
- noted the report and considered what the ambition for the use of digital should be for House services; and
- provided feedback on further measures that should be taken to strengthen PDS's relationship with members in general, in particular how the Commission wishes to engage with PDS, including topics for discussion at future meetings.

## 7. Cyber and Information security – current work and future improvements C/24–26/84 [HIGHLY RESTRICTED]

Andy Smith, Chief Information Officer and MD of Parliamentary Digital Service, and Mark Harbord, Chief Information Security Officer, introduced the paper. The paper made the Commission aware of proposed improvements and current work around opportunities for improvement in Parliament's cyber and Information security posture.

In discussion the following points were noted:

- Statistics on phishing testing to be circulated. **[Action: Andy Smith]**
- Members who 'fail' a phishing test should be offered training on detecting phishing attempts.
- Work was ongoing focussing on quickly recovering systems and ensuring resilience in the case of a denial of IT.

The Commission noted and endorsed the current and proposed work ongoing in this area.

**Any Other Business**

**R&R Phase I Expenditure Limit**

On Monday, the Client Board invited each Commission individually to revise the phase I expenditure limit to £540m, in accordance with the 2019 Act.

**R&R Delivery Authority Board Chair**

The Client Board also agreed to renew the appointment of Dr Simon Thurley CBE as Chair of the Delivery Authority Board. Again, in accordance with the 2019 Act, each Commission is required to individually agree to the appointment of the DA Chair.

The Commission thanked Simon Burton for his work as Clerk of the Parliaments and wished Chloe Mawson best wishes for the role, which she was due to start on 2 April.

**Alasdair Love**  
Secretary to the Commission

**Raquel Fernández Vidal**  
Executive Officers to the Commission