

THE HOUSE OF COMMONS COMMISSION

External members of the House of Commons Commission: nomination of candidates

Report presented to the House of Commons by the Speaker

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Commissioners

The Speaker (Sir Lindsay Hoyle) (Chair), The Leader of the House of Commons (Sir Alan Campbell), Steve Barclay, Rachel Blake, Bobby Dean, Jesse Norman, Nick Smith, Tom Goldsmith (Clerk of the House), Marianne Cwynarski (Director General (Operations)) and Shrinivas Honap (External member).

Secretary to the Commission: Lloyd Owen

Assistant Secretary: Ed Potton

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Introduction

1. Since the 2014 Report by the House of Commons Governance Committee, and the subsequent passing of the House of Commons Commission Act 2015, the Commission has been required to have two external members who are appointed by Resolution of the House. The external members cannot be Members of either House or members of staff of either House.
2. Since the addition of the external members, the practice has been to appoint each for an initial period, with the option of extension.
3. In December 2025 Catherine Ward came to the end of her term on the Commission. Catherine was appointed in June 2023 for an initial 18-month term, which the Commission extended for a further year to the end of December 2025. In September 2026 Shrinivas Honap will come to the end of a five-year term on the Commission, having been appointed for an initial three years in October 2021, which the Commission extended for a further two years. In December 2025 the Commission agreed a recruitment process to fill these vacancies. This report puts forward their recommended candidates.
4. The Commission places on record its thanks to Catherine Ward and Shrinivas Honap for their contribution to the Commission's work.

Recruitment process

5. In December 2025, the Commission agreed the recruitment process to appoint new external members, including the following essential and desirable skills and experience required for the successful candidate:

Essential

- Senior executive leadership experience within a complex organisation in either the private, public or not-for-profit sectors.
- Experience of non-executive work on public or private sector boards, including participation in ancillary non-executive duties such as senior appointment processes.
- Excellent analytical skills combined with strong decision-making skills that have been tested and proven on complex and sensitive issues.
- Extensive experience of successfully managing relationships with a range of senior stakeholders, which demonstrates the ability to work in a complex political environment.

- Excellent communication and presentation skills, with the ability to inspire confidence and respect.
- (For one post) Relevant experience and appropriate qualifications to chair the Audit Committees. The individual need not be a qualified accountant but must be able to demonstrate the ability to manage complex financial and audit issues from experience.
- A demonstrable commitment to diversity and inclusion.

Desirable [candidates were sought to meet some, but not necessarily all of these criteria]

- (For one post) Experience of assurance and/or audit processes and experience of running or overseeing a savings and efficiency programme;
 - Experience of either running or evaluating large programmes, particularly successful estates and buildings programmes;
 - Experience of utilising digital systems and development to improve services;
 - Commercial experience supporting contract evaluation and performance;
 - Familiarity with the workings of Parliament
6. The recruitment process asked candidates how they would effectively contribute to their roles as members of the Commission, R&R Client Board and Audit Committee.
 7. The post was advertised on the Guardian online job listings, LinkedIn, the House of Commons careers site and the Civil Service jobs website.
 8. In February, a first panel, consisting of the Rachel Blake MP, a member of the Commission, the Director General (Operations), Marianne Cwynarski CBE, Isabel Doverty, a former Civil Service Commissioner, and the Secretary to the Commission, Lloyd Owen, sifted applications and undertook a first-round interview.
 9. The final selection panel comprised:
 - Mr Speaker (Chair)
 - Leader of the House, Sir Alan Campbell MP
 - Ed Beale, Chamber Business Team Strategic Director (nominee of the Clerk of the House who was unable to attend at short notice)

The nominated candidates

10. Following the process set out above, the selection panel recommended to the Commission that Elizabeth Honer and Nick Ong-Seng be nominated as its new external members.
11. Elizabeth Honer is an experienced Chief Executive and Finance Director in the public and not for profit sectors. She is currently Chief Executive of the Royal Academy of Dance, having previously been Chief Executive of the Government Internal Audit Agency and Finance Director of the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office. In addition, Elizabeth is a visiting fellow at the Cranfield School of Management and

has previously held non-executive roles in the private and public sectors. The Commission considers that her experience working for the Administration previously in Director-level roles, ending in 2013, will be beneficial to its work.

12. Nick Ong-Seng has board level experience in the private sector, having undertaken a series of lead risk and compliance roles along with chairing an insurance subsidiary. His last role, ending in 2025, was as Global Head of Governance, Risk and Assurance for Amazon. He currently holds non-executive roles as Chair of Lawyers in Local Government, Chair of Moore Global's Ethics Committee, Vice Chair of the CGMA Examination Board and Chair of the Quality Assurance Scheme Committee, for the Institute and Faculty of Actuaries.
13. The Commission believes that the candidates will bring a diverse range and depth of experience. This will benefit the work of the Commission in the coming years as the House of Commons Administration implements a new strategy, the Savings and Improvement programme and a range of works to the Estate, including to the Northern Estate, and preparation for Restoration and Renewal.
14. All the candidates were required to provide written declarations regarding past political activity and potential conflicts of interest. The selection panel was satisfied that Elizabeth and Nick had not undertaken any political activity within the last five years that might affect the perception of their political impartiality. The panel was also satisfied that they did not have any private, voluntary, charitable, or political interests that might pose a conflict of interest in conducting the role of external member of the Commission.
15. The House of Commons Commission recommends that the House appoint Elizabeth Honer and Nick Ong-Seng as external members, for an initial period of three years, with the possibility to extend for a further two years. Elizabeth should be appointed as soon as possible, and Nick's appointment should commence on 1 October 2026.