



HOUSE OF LORDS COMMISSION

MINUTES

Wednesday 15 April 2026 10:00am–12:00 midday
in Committee Room 1 and online

Attendance

- Lord Speaker (Chair)
- Lord Gardiner of Kimble (Deputy Chair)
- Earl of Kinnoull (*virtually*)
- 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
- Lord True

Also in attendance:

- Lord Vaux of Harrowden (attending under Standing Order 64)
- Lord Collins of Highbury (attending under Standing Order 64)

Officials also in attendance:

Hannah Bryce, Director of Delivery, House of Commons; Marianne Cwynarski, Director General House of Commons; Andy Helliwell, Chief Operating Officer; Alix Langley, HR Director; Kate Long, Principal Private Secretary to the Lord Speaker; Paul Martin, Interim Director of Parliamentary Security; Chloe Mawson, Clerk of the Parliaments; Lucy Perry, Head of Internal Communications; Sarah Rayner, Chief Commercial Officer; Duncan Sagar, Clerk Assistant; Charlotte Simmonds, Managing Director Restoration & Renewal Client Team; Andy Smith, Managing Director, Parliamentary Digital Service; James Whittle, Chief of Staff, Clerk of the Parliaments' Office; and Michael Winders, Director of Communications.

On 23 March 2026 the Commission considered by correspondence:

Metropolitan Police Service Agreement
HCC 2025; [RESTRICTED]

This paper provided a line-by-line breakdown of the elements in the indirect costs which the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) will charge Parliament in 2026/27.

The Commission:

- endorsed the Metropolitan Police Service Special Services Agreement (SSA) budget for one year only, reserving their position from 2027/28 onwards, and subject to a review of charging methodology.

At the meeting on 15 April 2026, the Commission considered the following:

1. Minutes of Previous Meeting

The Commission agreed the record of the discussion of the meeting of the House of Lords Commission on 4 March 2026, with redactions.

The Commission welcomed Chloe Mawson in her new role as Clerk of the Parliaments and Duncan Sagar in his new role as Clerk Assistant.

2. Report from the Clerk of the Parliaments

Clerk of the Parliaments' Update Paper [HIGHLY RESTRICTED]

Chloe Mawson, Clerk of the Parliaments, reported to the Commission.

In discussion the following points were noted:

- An 'away day' style meeting would be held to discuss oversight of bicameral services. **[Action: Lord Speaker's Office]**
- There would be early discussion of corporate priorities to feed into the Administration's Corporate Business Plan for 2027-28.
- Following delays to members of the Civil Service Pension Scheme receiving their pension on retirement, the Commission expressed concern about the welfare of retired House staff who may be impacted.

3. Report from the Interim Security Director

Interim Security Director's report [HIGHLY RESTRICTED]

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

In discussion the following points were noted:

- A review of security construction programmes was underway.
- *[Restricted Access – More Information]*
- Security governance structures were too complex.
- *[Restricted Access – More Information]*
- There was concern about the continuing unavailability of the bus stop facing the Palace of Westminster, which was an inconvenience for Members and staff.
- There would be further discussion of the Parliamentary Streetscape Project.
[Action: Alasdair Love and Paul Martin]

4. **Parliamentary Commercial Department: strategic intent** C/24-26/85 [RESTRICTED]

Sarah Rayner, Chief Commercial Officer, introduced the paper. The paper described Commercial outcomes for Parliament that would be maximised by 2029-30 and how this would feel for stakeholders. It described the Parliamentary Commercial Department's delivery plans for these outcomes, set out dependencies, and articulated key risks.

In discussion the following points were noted:

- *[Restricted Access – More Information]*
- It would take three months to recruit new interim staff and six months for permanent staff from when permission to recruit is granted.
- There was a need to reduce reliance on interim staff.
- A benchmarking exercise on appropriate resourcing for PCD was underway.
- Rather than limit the scope of the department, it was necessary to meet the required resourcing.
- Resolving questions around the governance of PCD would assist in delivering the department's strategic intent.

The Commission:

- provided feedback on and endorsed the Strategic Intent;
- noted the importance of achieving value for money as an outcome; and
- requested a future report on implementation of the strategic intent to address the challenges it sets out.

5. **Estates Function Restructure Update and Proposal**

C/24-26/86 [HIGHLY RESTRICTED]

Marianne Cwynarski, Director General House of Commons, James Whittle, Chief of Staff, Clerk of the Parliaments' Office, and Hannah Bryce, Director of Delivery, House of Commons, introduced the paper. The paper set out the details of the scoping

work, conducted with extensive input from colleagues in Strategic Estates and other estates-related teams.

In discussion the following points were noted:

- The new interim Managing Director of Strategic Estates, Jonathan Dewsbury, had started in post on 13 April 2026.
- As with other bicameral services, Strategic Estates suffered from a lack of an effective bicameral governance structure.
- Effective leadership would be crucial in ensuring the success of the restructure.
- It may be necessary to review the ongoing projects.

The Commission:

- noted progress made and endorsed the proposal to divide Strategic Estates into a Parliamentary Estate Sponsor and a Programme Delivery Team; and
- agreed that the proposal should be subject to assurance on effective member governance, accountability and oversight.

6. Restoration and Renewal: Update on Decant Planning **C/24–26/88 [HIGHLY RESTRICTED]**

Andy Helliwell, Chief Operating Officer, and Charlotte Simmonds, Managing Director, Restoration and Renewal Client Team, introduced the paper. The paper updated the Commission on the status of decant planning.

In discussion the following points were noted:

- The debate on the Costed Proposals Report in both Houses would not take place this (2024-26) session.
- A clear direction from both Houses on the Costed Proposals Report was important and would shape further conversations around decant planning.
- There was a cost to delay, regardless of what decision was taken.
- Some Members asked how the estimated costs of fit out of the temporary accommodation would be challenged going forward.
- Some Members requested reassurance on the options for any longer-term use of the decant accommodation.

The Commission:

- noted the update on decant planning.

7. Review of Member Communications **C/24–26/87 [RESTRICTED]**

Michael Winders, Director of Communications, and Lucy Perry, Head of Internal Communications, introduced the paper. The paper updated the Commission on the

steps being taken to improve the effectiveness and impact of communications by the Administration to Lords Members, including recommended further actions.

In discussion the following point was noted: the large number of unsolicited emails sent by All Party Parliamentary Groups caused difficulties for Members, as their inboxes became full which risked important correspondence being missed.

The Commission:

- endorsed the priority areas for ongoing improvement, including inbox management, contact information, awareness raising, and PeerHub text messaging; and
- agreed the specific proposed actions around these areas.

8. Remote participation: eligibility to claim daily allowance **C/24–26/89 [RESTRICTED]**

Kate Long, Principal Private Secretary to the Lord Speaker, introduced the paper. This paper considered under which circumstances a member who is eligible to participate remotely is entitled to claim the daily allowance.

In discussion the following point was noted:

- the number of claims resulting from the change and the situations in which these occurred would be monitored.

The Commission:

- agreed that an eligible member participating remotely who, having signed up to speak or having notified their intention to take part remotely in an amending stage of a bill or on an item of business with a speakers' list, by the deadline, and who is present on the call when that business is taken but then is not called to speak, should be able to claim the daily allowance; and
- agreed that the Clerk of the Parliaments may exercise their discretion in respect of any claims being processed that meet the above criteria and were made on or after 1 January 2026.

Alasdair Love
Secretary to the Commission

Raquel Fernández Vidal
Executive Officer to the Commission