

**HOUSE OF LORDS COMMISSION****Minutes**

Tuesday 25 June 2021

**Attendance**

- Lord Speaker (Chairman)
- Lord Gardiner of Kimble (Deputy Chairman)
- Mathew Duncan (external member)
- Baroness Evans of Bowes Park
- Lord German
- Lord Hill of Oareford
- Lord Judge
- Lord Newby
- Nora Senior (external member)
- Baroness Smith of Basildon
- Lord Touhig
- Lord Vaux of Harrowden

Simon Burton, Clerk of the Parliaments, was in attendance. The meeting was held via Microsoft Teams.

**1. Minutes of Previous Meeting**

The Commission discussed the draft record of discussion of the previous meeting on 15 June 2021, and requested some changes.

**2. Steering Group for Change: Ellenbogen Review Report: Update**

Commission Secretary

C/21-22/16 HIGHLY RESTRICTED

With Annex:

Steering Group for Change: Ellenbogen Review Report

Baroness Donaghy, Chair of the Steering Group for Change

C/21-22/9 HIGHLY RESTRICTED

- A. The Lord Speaker welcomed Baroness Donaghy (Chair) and Lucy Molloy of the Steering Group for Change. Baroness Donaghy requested that the term of the Group be extended until at least the end of July 2022, noting that the Group was the only forum where members and staff worked together on an equal footing.
- B. The Steering Group had submitted and published its report reviewing progress on implementing the recommendations made in Naomi Ellenbogen QC's report into bullying and harassment in the House of Lords. Baroness Donaghy highlighted some of the Group's conclusions. Lucy Molloy emphasised that having a forum for considering culture change was valuable. The Lord Speaker invited discussion, noting that the Commission would not be asked to take decisions at the meeting except on extending the Group's term.

- C. In discussion, members of the Commission welcomed the report and were keen to make progress on considering its conclusions. It was suggested that more signposting should be available for members wishing to support other members in declining health, and that clarity was needed on what support House staff should or should not be expected to provide. Support was expressed for the report's conclusions on possible changes to the Independent Complaints and Grievance Scheme.
- D. The Commission **agreed** to approve the Steering Group for Change's request for an extension until at least the end of July 2022. Revised Terms of Reference would be brought for approval, and new members of the Group would be appointed to replace others standing down. The Commission Secretary would consult with Commission members about the next steps on the report.

### 3. **External Management Review: Update**

James Whittle, External Management Review Implementation Lead  
C/21-22/17 HIGHLY RESTRICTED

- A. The paper provided an update on the External Management Review (EMR) recommendations which the Commission had to date considered a priority, and set out some next steps for implementation. The process for recruiting the Chief Operating Officer was underway and the implementation lead for the review and the new secretariat for the Commission had been appointed. The paper also summarised the review's recommendations on an Oversight Panel to support the Commission.
- B. Members of the Commission discussed the proposed Oversight Panel. Points raised in discussion included that the Oversight Panel should not become a bureaucratic hurdle, and should be advisory rather than decision-making, and that the Panel should comprise members of the Commission. The Lord Speaker emphasised that he saw the Oversight Panel as increasing the Commission's capacity for considering strategic decisions. A member raised the suggestion of a memorandum of understanding between the Commission and the Clerk of the Parliaments: this would be discussed further.
- C. Following the implementation of the recommendations which had initially been prioritised after the report's publication, the Commission now needed to consider its further prioritisation of the rest of the EMR recommendations: it was **agreed** that a workshop would be arranged to facilitate this. The Commission would also need to discuss how to more clearly define its role in the evolving governance structure. The Commission **took note** of the update.

### 4. **Parliamentary Works Estimates Commission: Change in Lords Membership**

Baroness Evans of Bowes Park, The Lord Privy Seal  
C/21-22/18 HIGHLY RESTRICTED

The Commission **agreed** that, in line with its decision in September 2020, Lord Gardiner of Kimble (as Senior Deputy Speaker) should replace Lord McFall of Alcluth as one of the two Lords members of the Parliamentary Works Estimates Commission.

**5. Note for information on implementation of Commission decisions from 15 June 2021 meeting**

Clerk of the Parliaments

C/21-22/19 HIGHLY RESTRICTED

The Clerk of the Parliaments answered questions about his paper, which was for information. The Procedure and Privileges Committee would consider where pass-readers for divisions should be located. It was suggested that it should also consider how benefits from the new pass-reader system could be maximised, and how disruption to Committee meetings from divisions could be minimised. There was discussion of whether, in the autumn, members voting using the PeerHub interim solution would be able to vote anywhere on the Estate or only in a designated area: this would be considered by the Procedure and Privileges Committee.

**6. Clerk of the Parliaments' Monthly Update**

Clerk of the Parliaments

C/21-22/20 RESTRICTED

The paper was for information: Commission members asked about the results of a recent staff wellbeing survey and how it compared to relevant benchmarks, and for information about any outlying scores. Further information would be provided.

**7. Any Other Business and Next Meeting**

The Lord Privy Seal suggested that Commission members should discuss their views on decisions that the House would shortly need to make about allowances for members.

*[Restricted Access – More Information]*

The Administration was asked to prepare a paper on the basis of the Commission's discussion for agreement by correspondence.

The next meeting was scheduled for 16 July but might be moved. Future meetings would not be held on Fridays. Commission members were keen to hold their meetings in person or in hybrid form when possible.

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