



HOUSE OF LORDS COMMISSION

Minutes

Wednesday 10 November 2021, 9am

Attendance

- Lord Speaker (Chair)
- Lord Gardiner of Kimble (Deputy Chair)
- 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.

Since the previous meeting, the Commission had approved paper **C/21-22/43**, titled **Revised: Arrangements for the Parliamentary estate: Winter 2021/22**. The Commission:

- approved the triggers listed at the Annex for when further health-related measures would be required;
- agreed that local health-related measures would be implemented immediately by the Parliamentary Test and Trace team, as directed by UKHSA and Westminster City Council, when the agreed trigger points were reached, with advance consultation with the leader of the relevant team or party/group, and with the communication and consultation described in the paper (no local measures would be implemented that were expected to have an impact on the core business of the House without prior consultation with the Commission);
- agreed that estate wide health-related measures would require approval from the Commission, and prior consultation with the Lord Speaker, Senior Deputy Speaker, Chairman of the Services Committee and Usual Channels;
- agreed that any decisions required about the prioritisation of catering services due to supply chain issues should be taken by the Services Committee;
- agreed to support and encourage the personal behaviours set out in paragraph 32 (about testing, reporting and appropriate behaviour where risks were higher) to improve the resilience of the House;
- and agreed that greater access for non-passholders should be facilitated within quieter periods on the estate, and that decisions on which groups to prioritise should be taken through consultation with the Services Committee, Black Rod, the Parliamentary Security Directorate and the COVID Group, guided by the Commission's discussion on its risk appetite.

Also since the previous meeting, the Commission had agreed certain COVID-19 mitigation measures by correspondence. On Monday 1 November the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) had advised that the threshold had been met for the Parliamentary estate to be considered to have an outbreak. The Commission had agreed:

- That all events on the estate that did not relate to parliamentary business should be cancelled, including banqueting events (Member-sponsored and third party), tours and other meetings;
- That everyone should seek to maintain distancing as far as possible on the Estate, including in committee proceedings where it was possible to do so without disrupting the conduct of business; Chairs would be asked to take a stronger role in ensuring compliance with distancing and the wearing of face coverings or moving to virtual select committee meetings;
- That Members should minimise the number of non-passholders they brought on to the Estate, and that there should be a business need for any visitors (the maximum of six non-passholders per Member remained in place);
- That other passholders could bring in non-passholders only for a business need;
- That it expected Members to wear face coverings in line with current Government guidance, which was that they should be worn where the risk of transmission was considered to be high, which was now considered to be the case across the Parliamentary estate.

There was no proposal to change the operation of the Chambers. In the Moses Room, individuals should seek to maintain distancing as far as possible (but numbers were not restricted).

The Commission had agreed that these measures should take effect from Tuesday 2 November and be in place until Friday 12 November.

I. Review of additional measures on the Parliamentary estate

Simon Burton, Clerk of the Parliaments
C/21-22/50; HIGHLY RESTRICTED

Professor John Simpson and Dr Mark Salter of UKHSA updated the Commission on the COVID-19 outbreak on the estate.

The Commission agreed that the current measures (which had taken effect on Tuesday 2 November) should remain in effect until at least Friday 19 November, and that the Commission would review the measures once further advice had been provided by UKHSA on Wednesday 17 November.

(This decision was re-confirmed and communicated on Monday 15 November, to align with decision-making in the House of Commons Commission.)

The Commission discussed the messages it wished to convey including encouragement to take up PCR tests.

2. Any Other Business and Next Meeting

The next meeting was scheduled for 16 November.

Susannah Street
Secretary to the Commission
020 7219 8875
streets@parliament.uk