

Written evidence submitted by the Green MPs (EVO 13)

Adrian Ramsay MP
Carla Denyer MP
Ellie Chowns MP
Sian Berry MP

Introduction

The Green MPs are grateful to the Modernisation Committee for their proactive engagement and outreach to MPs, including the smaller parties in this new Parliament. We recognise achieving change will depend on cross party support and we're keen to pursue three key reforms:

- 1) **Voting efficiency:** each lobby vote takes around 15 minutes. Where there's more than one vote (lobby division) in a row, we propose that only the first is through the lobbies and the rest could be electronic (whilst remaining on the Estate). A system along these lines would retain the benefits of seeing other MPs/Ministers in the lobbies, which is important for backbenchers, whilst increasing efficiency for both MPs and house staff.
- 2) **Fridays:** we support the proposal to make this a formal constituency day and weave Private Members' Bills (PMBs) into rest of week.
- 3) **Speaking time limits:** time limits for all backbench speeches, announced at start of a debate so more members get to contribute to debates and MPs run less risk of sitting for hours without being called to contribute.

Bring in e-voting (from the estate)

Each lobby vote takes around 15 minutes. A huge amount of time is wasted, for example, we recently had 9 x 15-minute votes in a row on the Budget Resolutions. Better, smarter, more efficient systems are out there, for example, as used by MEPs.

Furthermore, our understanding is that the system during the Covid-19 pandemic worked well but was abolished at the insistence of the then Leader of the House, Jacob Rees Mogg, with no consultation. E-voting within the precincts of the estate would save huge amounts of time and allow better scrutiny.

Where there's more than one vote (lobby division) in a row, we propose that only the first is through the lobbies and the rest could be electronic. This system would maintain the benefits of seeing other MPs in the lobbies, something that is important for backbenchers, whilst increasing efficiency for both MPs and house staff.

We would also be interested in consideration of whether a certain time of day could be set aside for lobby divisions that need to be taken that day.

On e-voting, the Green MPs accept the principle of votes and debates being kept together and don't think this needs to be an obstacle to e-voting when there are multiple votes, for example. They very much hope consensus might be reached on this.

December 2024