

Research Briefing

By Richard Kelly

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# House of Commons: Services and facilities for MPs



## Summary

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# Summary

## Supporting the work of MPs

The House of Commons is the democratically elected House of the UK Parliament. It is responsible for scrutinising the work of Government, making laws, setting taxes and debating topical issues. The House of Commons is housed in the Palace of Westminster, a World Heritage Site.

The House of Commons service employs around 3,000 people to support these activities. The work of the House of Commons service includes:

- The services that facilitate MPs' legislative and scrutiny work in the House of Commons Chamber, Westminster Hall, and in committees
- Legal advice to Speaker
- Research services for MPs
- Maintenance of the Palace of Westminster and the rest of the Parliamentary Estate
- Engaging the public with the role of Parliament
- HR advice and support to assist with the running of MPs offices
- Corporate functions including HR, payroll, finance and corporate planning
- IT and technology services to all of Parliament (jointly run by the Commons and Lords)

The introduction to the most recent [House of Commons annual report and accounts](#) (PDF) explains how the House Service supports the work of the elected House of Commons.

In a speech to the Institute for Government's Annual Conference 2023, on 17 January 2023, the Leader of the House, Penny Mordaunt, said she was [going to focus on "making our legislature the best in the world"](#). She wanted to make sure MPs were enabled to serve their constituents.

## Governance of the House of Commons

The House of Commons Commission is responsible for setting the strategic priorities and objectives of the House Service under section 2 of the House of Commons Commission Act 2015.

The Commons Executive Board provides advice to the Commission in relation to strategic priorities and objectives.

The Clerk of the House, as Head of the House Service, has overall responsibility for, and provides strategic leadership of, the House Service.

The Clerk has delegated responsibility for day-to-day provision of operational services to the Director General. (Both the Clerk of the House and the Director General are also members of the House of Commons Commission.)

Supported by the Commons Executive Board, they are accountable to the Commission for delivery of the strategy. The Commons Executive Board decides policy and operational issues to support service delivery.

Heads of teams in the House of Commons have delegated responsibility to set [annual business plans to support the strategy](#) and are accountable to the Clerk for delivering the objectives in these plans.

## The House Service Strategy

The House of Commons Service has developed the next House of Commons Service Strategy, for the period 2023-27 (it has not yet been published). It will replace the current [House Service Strategy](#) which runs until March 2023.

The new strategy was agreed by the House of Commons Commission at its meeting on 16 May 2022.

## 1

## Services and facilities for MPs

The House of Commons Service provides procedural support and advice to Members along with a wide range of essential services that facilitate the work of the House.

### Debate on Parliamentary services, February 2023

The Backbench Business Committee has provided time for a debate on parliamentary services for MPs, provided by the House Service. The debate was initiated by the Administration Committee. It was scheduled to take place in the Chamber on 8 September 2022.<sup>1</sup> However, it was replaced by debates on energy costs and the Social Security (Special Rules for End of Life) Bill.<sup>2</sup>

The debate is now scheduled to take place on 9 February 2022.<sup>3</sup>

In applying for the debate, in March 2022, Sir Charles Walker, Chair of the Administration Committee, noted how demands on MPs had changed dramatically since 1992, when he was a researcher. He thought the House would “really value knowing what is important to us [MPs] in a well-resourced business environment”.<sup>4</sup>

He highlighted:

- “getting first-class legislative advice”, needed as bills grew longer and more complex;
- IT services. He said, “we need to explain to them [the House Service] in the debate what great IT services look like and why we need them”; and
- “a well-resourced and expert-led Library”. He said it had been taken for granted but it was important to MPs to have “sector experts at the end of the phone and ... that needs to be built on and maintained”.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> [HC Deb 21 July 2022 c1119](#)

<sup>2</sup> [HC Deb 7 September 2022 c268](#)

<sup>3</sup> [HC Deb 2 February 2022 c466](#)

<sup>4</sup> Backbench Business Committee, [Representations: Backbench Debates](#), 22 March 2022, Q1. Between 2004 and 2009, debates were held annually in Westminster Hall on the House of Commons Commission’s Annual Report

<sup>5</sup> Backbench Business Committee, [Representations: Backbench Debates](#), 22 March 2022, Q1

He also intended the debate would be an opportunity to “showcase the work we do, the demands we are under and the good things we do in this place”.<sup>6</sup> He continued:

For example, the education unit is outstanding and has transformed the level of engagement between schools and this place and the understanding of what we do as legislators in Parliament, as opposed to what happens in local authorities.<sup>7</sup>

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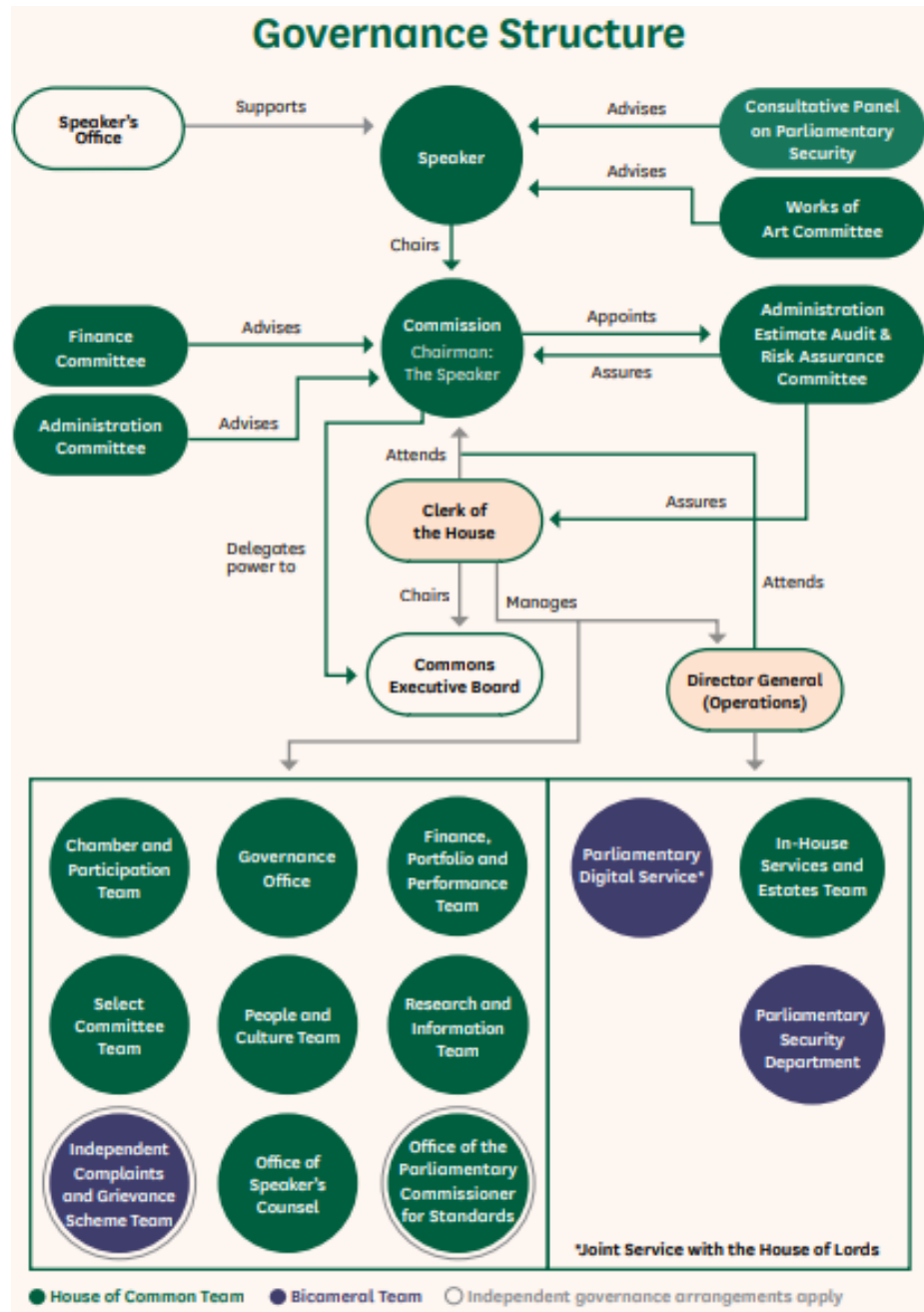
<sup>6</sup> Backbench Business Committee, [Representations: Backbench Debates](#), 22 March 2022, Q3

<sup>7</sup> As above



## 2 House services

### 2.1 Governance Structure of the House Service



Source: House of Commons, [Annual Report and Accounts 2021-22](#) (PDF), 11 October 2022, HC 707 2022-23, p56

## 2.2

# Departments of the House<sup>8</sup>

A list of the managing directors of the teams within the House Service is given in the Appendix of this briefing.

## Chamber and Participation Team (CPT)

CPT provides the core services that facilitate MPs' legislative and scrutiny work in the House of Commons Chamber, Westminster Hall, general committees and some related select committees, and engages the public with parliamentary business.

CPT comprises the Chamber Business Team, the Official Report, the Serjeant at Arms Team, Participation and the Interparliamentary Relations Office. The Office of Speaker's Counsel and the Office of the Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards are also located in CPT for administrative purposes and receive some financial and HR support, but report to the Clerk of the House.

## Governance Office

The Governance Office supports the Clerk, Director General and Commons Executive Board, as well as carrying out key corporate functions, including Communications, Governance and Assurance, Strategic Business Resilience, Diversity and Inclusion, and Commons R&R Direction.

The Information Compliance Team (formerly IRIS – Information Rights and Information Security) provides, among other things, guidance for MPs and their staff on data protection and GDPR in the context of constituency work/their controller responsibilities. (The Information Compliance Team is moved from R&I to the Governance Office on 1 August 2022.)

## Finance, Portfolio and Performance Team

The Finance, Portfolio and Performance Team is made up of teams such as Financial Accounting; Financial Services; and Planning and Performance.

## Select Committee Team

The Select Committee Team provides support and advice for all aspects of the work of select committees. Each Committee has a secretariat, headed by the Clerk of the Committee, supplemented where necessary by specialist advisers.

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<sup>8</sup> All information here is taken from House of Commons, [Offices and Teams](#) [intranet]

## People and Culture Team

The People and Culture Team is made up of teams such as Employee Pay and Pensions, HR Systems and Data, Cultural Transformation, the Decant Team, Health and Wellbeing, HR Advice and Policy, Learning and Organisational Development and others.

### Members' Services Team (MST)

The MST sits within the People and Culture Team. The MST was set up following recommendations made by Gemma White QC, who carried out an independent inquiry into the bullying and harassment of MPs' parliamentary staff in 2019.<sup>9</sup> The team has been in place since March 2020 and incorporates several main elements:

- an HR service for MPs and their proxies which is delivered by the Members' HR Advice Service. MST has also published a range of best practice employment guides for MPs, which are supported by regular employment workshops;
- engagement and pastoral support to all MPs' staff - including signposting to key services – which is delivered by the MST Engagement Team;
- research into Member and Members' staff engagement and interaction with House services.

## Research and Information Team (R&I)

Teams within Research and Information provide services to MPs, Parliament and the public. This includes online subscriptions, and research by the Commons Library and the Parliamentary Office of Science and Technology (POST).

The Commons Library provides a range of services for MPs and their staff. This includes impartial research and statistical analysis, a confidential requests service, book loans, access to online resources, training and events.

POST is governed by a cross-party board comprised of members from both Houses and academic representatives from the national academies. POST provides independent, balanced and accessible research and policy support for select committees from both Houses. It provides briefings, ad hoc research, horizon scanning, all mainly for committees; oversees the Parliamentary Fellows scheme; and, through the Knowledge Exchange Unit, helps academic engagement with Parliament.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Gemma White, [Bullying and Harassment of MPs' Parliamentary Staff – Independent Inquiry Report](#) (PDF), July 2019, HC 2206 2017-19

<sup>10</sup> Further information [about POST can be found on its website](#)

## Office of Speaker's Counsel

The Office of Speaker's Counsel (OSC) gives legal advice to Mr Speaker, the Clerk, a number of Committees and all the departments of the House.

## Office of the Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards

The Office of the Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards deals with the application of the [Code of Conduct](#) and related Rules that apply to MPs. This includes the registration of financial interests held by MPs and the investigation of complaints about Members who have allegedly breached the Code or related Rules.

The Commissioner also has oversight of investigations conducted under the Independent Complaints and Grievance Scheme. The Commissioner is the decision-maker for investigations conducted under the scheme, investigating allegations from the parliamentary community about harassment, bullying or sexual harassment by MPs.

## Independent Complaints and Grievance Scheme (ICGS)

The bicameral ICGS team is responsible for the ICGS, liaising with investigators, complainants, and respondents, and implementing improvements to the Scheme. The ICGS team sits independently of any other team in the House of Commons or the House of Lords. It became independent of any HR function and bicameral following a recommendation by Alison Stanley's in a six-month review of the ICGS.<sup>11</sup>

A joint ICGS Memorandum of Understanding—setting out the financial, HR and governance arrangements for the bicameral ICGS team—was agreed by the Lords and Commons Administrations in March 2020.<sup>12</sup>

## In-House Services and Estates Team (IHSE)

IHSE manages the day-to-day care of the parliamentary estate. Services provided by the IHSE include catering, retail and parliamentary maintenance.

## Strategic Estates

The Strategic Estates Team manages the Parliamentary Estate. Their work encompasses a broad set of responsibilities, including the delivery of construction projects, the provision of specialist planning and design support,

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<sup>11</sup> Alison Stanley CBE FCIPD, [Independent 6-month review: UK Parliament Independent Complaints & Grievance Scheme](#) (PDF), 31 May 2019, Recommendation 2, para 49

<sup>12</sup> Independent Complaints & Grievance Scheme, [Annual Report \(July 2019 – July 2020\)](#) (PDF), Memorandum of Understanding, Annex B, p 41

and the care and development of our internationally significant heritage collections, among others.

## Parliamentary Digital Service

The Parliamentary Digital Service, a joint department of both Houses of Parliament, provides technology and intranet services to all parliamentary users.

It is also responsible for the strategic direction of Parliament's digital offering through [Parliament's Digital Strategy](#) and the delivery and management of parliamentary digital platforms, including the website.

## Parliamentary Security Department

The Parliamentary Security Department's (PSD) purpose is to keep Parliament safe and open for business.

PSD sets the security strategy, provides expert advice and delivers an operational service. It does this in partnership with the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) and by working closely with the Parliamentary Digital Service, Strategic Estates, Parliamentary Estates Directorate, Serjeant at Arms Directorate, Black Rod's office, Restoration & Renewal programme and other key stakeholders.

PSD is led by the Director of Security for Parliament, who is directly accountable to Mr Speaker and the Lord Speaker and line managed by the Director General of the Commons and the Clerk of the Parliaments.

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## 3 Governance of the House of Commons

### 3.1 House of Commons Commission – a statutory body

The House of Commons Commission is a statutory body – it was created by the House of Commons (Administration) Act 1978. Its remit was extended and its composition widened by the House of Commons Commission Act 2015.

#### Remit of the Commons Commission

The Commission sets the strategic framework for providing services to the House, MPs and to the public; signs off the annual budget (the Estimate) for the House; and is the legal employer of House Service staff.<sup>13</sup>

The House of Commons Governance Committee,<sup>14</sup> in its December 2014 report, provided a fuller summary of the functions of the House of Commons Commission contained in sections 1, 2, 3 and 4 of the House of Commons (Administration) Act 1978:

- a) To prepare and present to the House for printing a report on the exercise of its functions in each financial year. The report must mention any delegation of the Commission's functions or change in existing delegations.
- b) To appoint the staff in House departments; this excludes the Clerk of the House, any Clerk Assistant, the Serjeant at Arms and the Speaker's personal staff.
- c) To keep the terms and conditions of staff of House Departments, including pay and grading, broadly in line with those of the Home Civil Service. The pensions of staff are to be kept in line with or provided under the Principal Civil Service Pension Scheme.
- d) To prepare and lay before the House an Estimate for expenses of the House Departments or expenses otherwise incurred for the service of the House (the Administration Estimate).
- e) To appoint the Accounting Officer for the Estimate.

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<sup>13</sup> House of Commons, [Annual Report and Accounts 2021-22](#) (PDF), 11 October 2022, HC 707 2022-23, p54

<sup>14</sup> The House of Commons Governance Committee was appointed following concerns about the process of appointing the new Clerk of the House of Commons and Chief Executive in the summer of 2014

f) To allocate functions to House Departments and Offices and to increase or decrease their number.<sup>15</sup>

As a result of a recommendation from the Governance Committee a new statutory function was added, by the House of Commons Commission Act 2014:

The Commission must from time to time set strategic priorities and objectives in connection with services provided by the House Departments.<sup>16</sup>

### Delegating functions

The Commission does not manage day to day operations. It delegates many of its functions to senior officials on the House of Commons Executive Board. The Commons Executive Board provides leadership for the House of Commons Service. It acts as a sub-committee of the Commission and is accountable to it.<sup>17</sup>

Following the Governance Committee's 2014 report, there were changes to the senior leadership structures of the House. Further changes have been made. From 1 September 2020, the Commons Executive Board has been chaired by the Clerk of the House, formerly it was chaired by the Director General of the House of Commons. In a notice to staff in July 2020, the Clerk explained that:

The Speaker and the House of Commons Commission are very clear that the primary focus of the House Service is to deliver core parliamentary functions and enable Members to participate effectively both in parliamentary proceedings and in their constituency work. The Commons Executive Board (CEB) and our teams within the House Service must be structured to deliver on that core focus.

In April 2021, the House Service was restructured, following a review by the Clerk of the House, at the request of the House of Commons Commission.<sup>18</sup>

The Commission agreed an Instrument of Delegation to the Commons Executive Board at its meeting on 20 November 2017. A [Revised Instrument of Delegation](#) was agreed by the Commission at its meeting on 20 July 2022. It sets out the responsibilities of the Board:

The Commons Executive Board shall:

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<sup>15</sup> House of Commons Governance Committee, [House of Commons Governance](#), 17 December 2014, HC 692 2014-15, para 37

<sup>16</sup> [House of Commons \(Administration\) Act 1978](#) (chapter 36), section 2(A1), inserted by section 2 of the [House of Commons Commission Act 2015](#) (chapter 24)

<sup>17</sup> House of Commons, [Annual Report and Accounts 2020-21](#) (PDF), 21 July 2021, HC 316 2021-22, p57 and p66 (see Appendix for details of the members of the Commons Executive Board)

<sup>18</sup> House of Commons, [Clerk's Management and Team Structure Review](#) (PDF), 9 November 2020 [intranet link]

1. be responsible for ensuring that the conditions of the service of staff in the House of Commons Service conform to the provisions of sections 2(2) and 2(3) of the House of Commons (Administration) Act 1978;
2. exercise on behalf of the Commission its other functions concerning staff in the House Service (except those relating to the appointment of staff under section 2(1) of the House of Commons (Administration) Act 1978 and those relating to House Departments under section 4 of the Act);
3. exercise on behalf of the Commission the responsibilities referred to in paragraph 5(5) of Schedule 1 of the House of Commons (Administration) Act 1978 for considering representations made in relation to matters affecting the interests, in connection with their employment, of staff in the House Service by trade unions who are recognised by the Commission in respect of such staff, and for the conduct of consultations and negotiations about such matters with those trade unions, subject always to the ultimate right of those trade unions to make representations to the Commission in cases where the procedures established under the authority of the Commission and agreed by both sides of the House of Commons Whitley Committee, have been exhausted.

Subject to the above, the Commons Executive Board shall also:

1. Assist the Commission in setting strategic objectives for the House of Commons Administration, and to be accountable to the Commission for the delivery of the strategy.
2. Assist the Finance Committee in the preparation of the Estimates and of other papers relating to those Votes, before their submission to the House of Commons Commission; and to carry out such other functions relating to the expenditure on the administration of House of Commons services as may from time to time be allocated to it by the Commission.
3. Direct the House of Commons Administration, deciding policy and operational issues as delegated to it by the Commission, the Speaker or the Clerk, managing performance KPIs and driving efficient use of resources.
4. Provide assurance to the Audit and Risk Committee on the management and mitigation of risk.
5. Support the Clerk in the exercise of their responsibilities as Corporate Officer, Accounting Officer and Head of the House of Commons Service, and to support the Director General (Operations) in the exercise of their responsibilities.

The Commons Executive Board shall exercise its powers subject to the control of the Accounting Officer in relation to expenditure.



## Composition of the House of Commons Commission

The legislation provides that the Commission is “to consist of seven parliamentary members, two external members and two official members”.<sup>19</sup>

The seven parliamentary members are:

- (a) Mr. Speaker,
- (b) the Leader of the House of Commons,
- (c) a member of the House of Commons nominated by the Leader of the Opposition,
- (d) four other members of the House of Commons appointed by the House of Commons, none of whom shall be a Minister of the Crown.<sup>20</sup>

The 2015 Act defined the external and official members. The external members cannot be a member of either House or a member of staff of either House.<sup>21</sup> It specified that the official members are:

- (a) the Clerk of the House of Commons or, if that office is vacant, a member of staff in the House Departments who is appointed as an official member by the Commission, and
- (b) the Director General of the House of Commons or, if that office is vacant or no longer exists, a member of staff in the House Departments who is appointed as an official member by the Commission.<sup>22</sup>

The current members of the Commission are:

Mr Speaker  
Penny Mordaunt (Leader of the House of Commons)  
Thangam Debbonaire (nominated by the Leader of the Opposition)  
Nickie Aiken  
Deidre Brock  
Nicholas Brown  
Sir Charles Walker  
John Benger (Clerk of the House of Commons, official member)  
Marianne Cwynarski (Director General (Operations), House of Commons, official member)  
Shrinivas Honap (external member)  
vacant<sup>23</sup> (external member)

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<sup>19</sup> [House of Commons \(Administration\) Act 1978](#) (chapter 36), section 1 (1A)

<sup>20</sup> House of Commons (Administration) Act 1978 (chapter 36), section 1, as amended

<sup>21</sup> [House of Commons Commission Act 2015](#) (chapter 24), section 1

<sup>22</sup> [House of Commons Commission Act 2015](#) (chapter 24), section 1

<sup>23</sup> Louise Wilson was appointed to the Commission in June 2021, for three years [[HC Deb 8 June 2021 cc921-926](#)]. She left the Commission in the autumn of 2022. At its meeting on 12 December 2022, the Commission considered the arrangements for the recruitment of a new lay member [House of Commons Commission, [Decisions](#) (PDF), 12 December 2022, Item 6]

The external members are appointed by resolution of the House of Commons. The motion for the resolution may only be made with the agreement of the Commission. External members are recruited “on merit on the basis of fair and open competition”.<sup>24</sup>

The backbench MPs remain parliamentary members over a dissolution and cease to be members only when they are no longer Members of Parliament or another person is nominated in their place.<sup>25</sup>

The House of Commons Governance Committee recommended that the four backbench members of the Commission “should have portfolio responsibilities”, allocated by the Commission. Two should chair the Administration and Finance Committees, and the other two “should take on key strategic priorities”.<sup>26</sup>

Sir Charles Walker is the Chair of the Administration Committee and Nicholas Brown is Chair of the Finance Committee.

## Meeting and decisions

The Commission usually meets monthly when the House is sitting. Its agendas and a brief record of the decisions it takes are posted on the parliamentary website:

- [House of Commons Commission](#)

## Informing the House

Sir Charles Walker MP answers both oral and written questions on behalf of the Commission.

## 3.2

## Advice to the House of Commons Commission

Both the Administration Committee and the Finance Committee are appointed to provide advice to the House of Commons Commission.<sup>27</sup>

## Remit of the Administration Committee

The Administration Committee is appointed under Standing Order No 139 to:

(1) ... consider the services provided for and by the House and to make recommendations thereon to the House of Commons Commission or to the Speaker. Any such recommendation whose implementation would incur

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<sup>24</sup> [House of Commons Commission Act 2014](#) (chapter 24), section 1 and Schedule, para 2

<sup>25</sup> [House of Commons \(Administration\) Act 1978](#) (chapter 36), Schedule 1, paras 2 and 3

<sup>26</sup> House of Commons Governance Committee, [House of Commons Governance](#), 17 December 2014, HC 692 2014-15, p3 and paras 143-147

<sup>27</sup> House of Commons, [Annual report and accounts 2020-21](#) (PDF), 21 July 2021, HC 316 2021-22, p60

additional expenditure charged to the Estimate for House of Commons: Administration shall also be considered by the Finance Committee.

(2) The committee shall make rules and give directions to Officers of the House in respect only of such administrative matters as may from time to time be determined by the Speaker or by the House of Commons Commission.<sup>28</sup>

The Administration Committee provides additional details on how it interprets its remit on its website: [Remit of the Administration Committee for the 2019 Parliament](#).

### General Election Planning and Services inquiry

In March 2022, [the Administration Committee launched an inquiry](#) into the support and services provided to MPs and their offices at general elections. The Committee sought submissions on support for retiring MPs; defeated MPs; returning MPs; newly-elected MPs; and staff in all four scenarios.<sup>29</sup>

The Committee's website notes:

Submissions are also invited on the practical support provided to Members' offices, including the process of moving into accommodation, IT support and training.<sup>30</sup>

The last day for submitting evidence was 27 May 2022.

## Remit of the Finance Committee

The Finance Committee is appointed under Standing Order No 144 to:

- (1) ... to consider expenditure on and the administration of services provided from the Estimates for the House of Commons and—
  - (a) with the assistance of the Executive Committee<sup>1</sup>, to prepare the Estimates for House of Commons: Administration for submission to the House of Commons Commission;
  - (b) with the assistance of the Accounting Officer, to prepare the Estimates for House of Commons: Members for submission to the Members Estimate Committee;
  - (c) to monitor the financial performance of the House Administration; and
  - (d) to report to the House of Commons Commission and the Members Estimate Committee or the Speaker on the financial and administrative implications of recommendations made to them by other Committees of the House.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> House of Commons, [Standing Orders – Public Business, 2021](#) (PDF), 2 December 2021, HC 804 2021-22, Standing Order No 139

<sup>29</sup> Administration Committee, General Election Planning and Services: [Call for Evidence](#)

<sup>30</sup> Administration Committee, [General Election Planning and Services](#) [Inquiry]

<sup>31</sup> House of Commons, [Standing Orders – Public Business, 2021](#) (PDF), 2 December 2021, HC 804 2021-22, Standing Order No 144

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## 4 House Service Strategy

The House of Commons Service has recently developed the next House of Commons Service Strategy, for the period 2023-27. It will replace the current strategy which runs until March 2023.

In applying for the debate on House services and facilities, Sir Charles Walker said:

I think it is important for colleagues to feed into this strategy, because unless we let the House know what we want, some of the things that are important to us will be missed.

[...] And I think the House would really value knowing what is important to us, in a well-resourced environment.<sup>32</sup>

### 4.1 The House Service Strategy

The current House Service Strategy was revised by the Commons Executive Board (CEB) at its meeting on 22 April 2021. At the same meeting, the CEB agreed how the next strategy, which comes into effect in April 2023, would be agreed.<sup>33</sup>

The current Strategy says:

The House Service strategy informs everything that we do as an organisation. It explains why we are here, what we are seeking to achieve, how we work together and the culture we want to create. It guides our business planning process and sets the direction for all of our operational activity.

In order to deliver on our mission, the House of Commons Commission has agreed a set of strategic goals, in place until March 2023.

#### **Our Mission**

The mission of the House Service is to support a thriving parliamentary democracy through delivering a high level of professional services to Members, their staff and the wider parliamentary community. Everyone in the House Service has a part to play in helping to make this happen.

We have four strategic goals:

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<sup>32</sup> Backbench Business Committee, [Representations: Backbench Debates](#), 22 March 2022, Q1.

<sup>33</sup> John Benger, [Commons Executive Board read-out](#), 22 April 2021 [internal link]

- Facilitating effective scrutiny, debate and representation
- Creating a diverse and inclusive working environment
- Securing Parliament now and for the future
- Involving and informing the public

#### **Our Vision**

##### **Everyone Has A Voice.**

- The future direction for our organisation, where all colleagues are heard and respected. Our vision also reminds us that the House of Commons is the democratically elected chamber of the UK Parliament, where MPs speak and act on behalf of their constituents.

#### **Our Values**

##### **Inclusive, Courageous, Trusted, Collaborative.**

- These four values guide our behaviour, decisions and actions, and describe the culture we want to build. They also help us to achieve our strategic goals by providing a framework for excellent performance.<sup>34</sup>

## 4.2

## Developing and agreeing the new strategy

In August 2021, the House of Commons Service announced that Emily Baldock had been appointed as Director of Strategy and Business Planning for the House of Commons.<sup>35</sup>

The announcement on Parliament's internal intranet said Emily Baldock would be "responsible for leading the development of the next House of Commons Service Strategy, as well as overseeing the corporate and team business planning process". Her post would sit within the Governance Office.

The notice said the new role would "help realise the ambition of the organisation" to integrate the House Service Strategy with business planning and performance.

The notice said Emily Baldock would work closely with the Clerk of the House, the Director General, Commons Executive Board (CEB) and staff in Finance, Portfolio and Performance and Business Management Directors.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> House of Commons, [House Service Strategy](#) [intranet link]

<sup>35</sup> House of Commons news, [New Director of Strategy and Business Planning appointed](#), 25 August 2021 [intranet link] ([weblink](#))

<sup>36</sup> As above

At its meeting on 28 April 2022, the CEB agreed a revised draft strategy to present to the House of Commons Commission.<sup>37</sup> The CEB noted that the Finance and Administration Committees “had both been engaged on the strategy and were content”. The CEB also noted the Lords would be consulted on the strategy.<sup>38</sup>

The Commission considered the new House Service Strategy at its meeting on 16 May 2022.<sup>39</sup> At its subsequent meeting, the CEB noted that “the House of Commons Service Strategy 2023-27 had been agreed by the Commission and finalised”.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> Commons Executive Board, [Decisions of the Commons Executive Board, 28 April 2022](#) (PDF) Item 1(c)

<sup>38</sup> As above

<sup>39</sup> House of Commons Commission, [Agenda – Monday 16 May](#) (PDF), Item 5

<sup>40</sup> Commons Executive Board, [Decisions of the Commons Executive Board, 26 May 2022](#) (PDF) Item 4(c)

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## 5 Leader of the House on services for MPs

On 17 January 2023, the Leader of the House, Penny Mordaunt, gave a speech, entitled “Delivering through Parliament for the British people”, to the Institute for Government’s Annual Conference 2023. At the end of her speech, she said she was going to focus on “making our legislature the best in the world”. She wanted to make sure MPs were enabled to serve their constituents. She said:

So, as Leader of the House of Commons, while I will be focused on getting our legislative agenda through, keeping the building from falling down and I am hoping to get Steve Bray’s PA system permanently confiscated.

I will be doing something else too.

I’m also going to focus on making our legislature the best in the world.

That the services it provides enable MPs to have the most agency and capacity to serve their constituents as possible.

We will benchmark ourselves, in the first instance, against our equivalents in the G7.

We will be working with all MPs to rebuild our offer to them, and we are going to do it swiftly.

To ensure they are ready when they arrive, and that they are supported properly to deliver through their parliamentary career.

All that you’ll hear today - from every perspective and political hue - will be aided if we strengthen the most direct connectivity from citizen to real power: their MP.

I want them to be as effective as they possibly can be.

Their workplace needs to modernise,

The systems that we built during Covid demonstrate we have all sorts of options we currently choose not to use.

We need to move at the speed that business and science needs us to.

To improve our responsiveness and awareness, ‘slow and dull’ will no longer do.

And we need new partnerships to help us protect and defend democracy.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> Office of the Leader of the House of Commons, “[Delivery through Parliament for the British people](#)”, Keynote speech from Penny Mordaunt, Leader of the House of Commons, at the Institute for Government annual conference, 17 January 2023

## Appendix – Members of the Commons Executive Board

The membership of the Commons Executive Board, defined by post, is set out in the [Instrument of Delegation](#), agreed by the House of Commons Commission.<sup>42</sup>

The members of the Commons Executive Board and permanent invitees are listed below. An up to date list of [Commons Executive Board contacts](#) is available on the parliamentary intranet.

The current core members of the CEB are:

Clerk of the House	John Benger
Director General (Operations)	Marianne Cwynarski
Finance Director and Managing Director of Finance, Portfolio and Performance	Vicky Rock
Clerk Assistant and Managing Director of the Chamber and Participation Team	Sarah Davies
Managing Director of the Select Committee Team	Colin Lee
Librarian and Managing Director of Research and Information	Grant Hill-Cawthorne
Managing Director of Strategic Estates	Catherine Hallett (interim*)
Managing Director of People and Culture	Mandy Eddolls
Managing Director of the Parliamentary Digital Service	David Smith
Speaker's Counsel	Saira Salimi
Director of Security for Parliament	Alison Giles

\* The job advert for the Managing Director of Strategic Estates went live on 16 August 2022

<sup>42</sup> House of Commons Commission, [Instrument of Delegation](#), 17 May 2021



Permanent invitees are:

Head of the Governance Office and Secretary to the House of Commons Commission	Gosia McBride
Director of Communications	Alice Holmes and Clare Jennings

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