



DEBATE PACK

Number CDP 2016/0030, 1 February 2016

House of Commons Commission (External Members)

Richard Kelly

Summary

A motion to appoint two external members to the House of Commons Commission is scheduled to be considered on Tuesday 2 February 2016, in the Chamber.

The motion is in the name of the Leader of the House, Chris Grayling, who is a member of the House of Commons Commission.

The debate could last up to 90 minutes as the proceedings are in pursuance of section 1(4) of the House of Commons Commission Act 2015 (Standing Order No 16).

Contents

1. Background	2
1.1 Governance of the House of Commons	2
1.2 Recruitment of external members	3
2. Other relevant material	5
2.1 House of Commons publications	5
2.2 Library briefings	5

The House of Commons Library prepares a briefing in hard copy and/or online for most non-legislative debates in the Chamber and Westminster Hall other than half-hour debates. Debate Packs are produced quickly after the announcement of parliamentary business. They are intended to provide a summary or overview of the issue being debated and identify relevant briefings and useful documents, including press and parliamentary material. More detailed briefing can be prepared for Members on request to the Library.

1. Background

1.1 Governance of the House of Commons

In September 2014 the House of Commons Governance Committee was established “to consider the way the House was run and the allocation of responsibilities of the Clerk of the House and Chief Executive” (at the time the Clerk of the House was Clerk and Chief Executive).

The Governance Committee’s report [House of Commons Governance](#) was published on 17 December 2014. The Committee recommended changes to the role and composition of the House of Commons Commission and that the joint role of Clerk of the House of Commons and Chief Executive should be changed. A new Director General of the House of Commons should report to the Clerk of the House and have responsibility for resources and the delivery of all services. The changes to the Commission would require amendment of the [House of Commons \(Administration\) Act 1978](#).

It recommended that the Commission should increase in size from six members – all Members of the House of Commons to 11 members and should include:

- The Speaker, the Leader of the House and the Shadow Leader of the House (as at previously);
- Four further Members of the House, one from each of the largest three parties and one from the remaining membership and that each of them should be elected by the whole House (the Commission previously had three additional Members);
- Two external members (the Commission had has no external members/non-executives);
- Two official members, who are expected to be the Clerk of the House and the (new post of) Director General of the House of Commons.¹

The House endorsed the Committee’s report, following a debate on 22 January 2015. However, rather than approve the election of backbench members to the Commission, it agreed that the chairs of the Finance Committee and the Administration Committee should be members of the Commission.²

The *House of Commons Commission Act 2015* amended the 1978 Act to effect the changes proposed by the Governance Committee that required legislation. The Act changed the composition of the Commission as recommended by the Governance Committee.

¹ House of Commons Governance Committee, [House of Commons Governance](#), 17 December 2014, HC 692 2014-15, para 139

² [HC Deb 22 January 2015 cc407-458](#)

1.2 Recruitment of external members

The *House of Commons Commission Act 2015* requires that a motion for a resolution appointing an external member may be made only with the agreement of the Commission; and that a person who is the subject of a motion must have been selected by the parliamentary members on merit on the basis of fair and open competition.³

At its meeting on 15 July 2015, the Commission agreed to begin the process of recruiting its external members in September. In the meantime, the former external members of the Management Board, Dame Janet Gaymer and Barbara Scott, would continue to attend by invitation.⁴

At its meeting on 14 September 2015, the Commission agreed the recruitment process to be followed for the appointment of its external members.⁵ It agreed that Dame Janet Gaymer, who had originally been appointed to the Management Board, should continue to serve on the Commission until September 2018. A vacancy for an external member of the House of Commons Commission was subsequently advertised.⁶

At its meeting on 18 January 2016, the Commission agreed a draft motion to go before the House:

Appointment of Commission External Members

The Commission agreed the following draft motion:

That the following appointments be made to the House of Commons Commission in pursuance of section 1(4) of the House of Commons Commission Act 2015 –

- (1) Dame Janet Gaymer DBE QC(Hon.), until 30 September 2018; and
- (2) Jane McCall, for a period of three years.⁷

³ [House of Commons Commission Act 2015](#) (chapter 24), Schedule

⁴ House of Commons Commission, [Bulletin – 15 July 2015](#), 15 July 2015

⁵ House of Commons Commission, [Decisions – 14 September 2015](#), 14 September 2015

⁶ House of Commons, [House of Commons Commission Non-Executive Director](#)

⁷ House of Commons Commission, [Decisions – 18 January 2016](#), 19 January 2016

Box 1: Candidates

Dame Janet Gaymer

Dame Janet Gaymer DBE QC (Hon.) has held a number of high profile roles in both the public and private sectors. She was the Commissioner for Public Appointments in England and Wales and a Civil Service Commissioner from 2006 and 2010 and served on the Board of the Finance Ombudsman Service until 2013. Before 2006 she was the Senior Partner of Simmons & Simmons, a leading international law firm, based in the City of London. Dame Janet [was] a Lay Member of the Speaker's Committee for the IPSA [until 26 January 2016].⁸

Jane McCall

Jane McCall is the Managing Director of Landlord at Trafford Housing Trust, and has responsibility for the customer facing services across the organisation, including neighbourhoods, repairs, customers and property management. Jane sits on the leadership team which has corporate responsibilities for the organisation's performance and strategic direction. Prior to Jane's appointment at THT, she was an independent consultant and worked on various aspects of housing including strategies and operational reviews. Jane has worked in the housing sector for almost 26 years and has been in Senior Management for the last 13 years. Her previous posts include Managing Director of 2 business subsidiaries within the Regenda Group, and Divisional Technical Director for The Places for People Group. In addition to her post at THT, Jane is a governor at Egerton High School in Trafford, a mixed sex secondary school for pupils aged 11-16 who have a range of social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. Jane's main interests outside work are her family; she is married with a 10 year old daughter. Jane also cycles for fitness.⁹

⁸ House of Commons, [Dame Janet Gaymer: Chair of the Administration Estimate Audit Committee](#)

⁹ Trafford Housing Trust, [Executive Directors](#)

2. Other relevant material

2.1 House of Commons publications

House of Commons Governance Committee, [House of Commons Governance](#), 17 December 2014, HC 692 2014-15

2.2 Library briefings

House of Commons Library Briefing Paper, [The Administration of the House of Commons](#), SN06976, 21 January 2015

House of Commons Library Briefing Paper, [House of Commons Commission Bill 2014-15](#), RP 15/08, 17 February 2015

2.3 Current members of the Commission

John Bercow (Chair)	Speaker
Sir Paul Beresford	Conservative
Rt Hon Tom Brake	Liberal Democrat
Rt Hon Nicholas Brown	Labour
Chris Bryant	Labour
Rt Hon Chris Grayling (Leader of the House)	Conservative
Stewart Hosie	Scottish National Party
David Natzler	Clerk of the House
Ian Ailles	Director General, House of Commons ¹⁰

¹⁰ House of Commons Commission, [Membership](#)

About the Library

The House of Commons Library research service provides MPs and their staff with the impartial briefing and evidence base they need to do their work in scrutinising Government, proposing legislation, and supporting constituents.

As well as providing MPs with a confidential service we publish open briefing papers, which are available on the Parliament website.

Every effort is made to ensure that the information contained in these publically available research briefings is correct at the time of publication. Readers should be aware however that briefings are not necessarily updated or otherwise amended to reflect subsequent changes.

If you have any comments on our briefings please email papers@parliament.uk. Authors are available to discuss the content of this briefing only with Members and their staff.

If you have any general questions about the work of the House of Commons you can email hcinfo@parliament.uk.

Disclaimer

This information is provided to Members of Parliament in support of their parliamentary duties. It is a general briefing only and should not be relied on as a substitute for specific advice. The House of Commons or the author(s) shall not be liable for any errors or omissions, or for any loss or damage of any kind arising from its use, and may remove, vary or amend any information at any time without prior notice.

The House of Commons accepts no responsibility for any references or links to, or the content of, information maintained by third parties. This information is provided subject to the [conditions of the Open Parliament Licence](#).