



# House of Commons: providing information and access for the public

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Author: Oonagh Gay

Section Parliament and Constitution Centre

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In October 2001, the House of Commons Commission adopted an outline strategic plan, which included a 'core task' of 'providing information and access for the public', and a specific development objective 'to improve public understanding and knowledge of the work of the House and to increase its accessibility, subject to the requirements of security'

This note outlines progress since the launch of the plan, and gives details of some of the current initiatives in this area. There is a related note on [The Puttnam \(Hansard Society\) Commission: Members Only? Parliament in the Public Eye \(SN/PC/4106\)](#)

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# **1 Overview**

In October 2001, the House of Commons Commission adopted an outline strategic plan. This incorporated four permanent 'core tasks' for the House service, and included eight specific development objectives for the period 2001 to 2006 that recognised 'the need to develop, adapt and improve'. One core task is 'providing information and access for the public'; and one development objective is 'to improve public understanding and knowledge of the work of the House and to increase its accessibility, subject to the requirements of security'.<sup>1</sup>

Aspects of providing information and access to the public form part of the work of each of the departments of the House, which between them are responsible for visitor access, retail, education, information, the website and media work.

There has been increasing co-operation in these areas, co-ordinated on behalf of the Commons Management Board by the Group on Information for the Public (GIP), a group of senior officials, including a representative from the House of Lords, to help promote co-ordination across Parliament.

There is a widely held view that there is significant scope for strengthening public understanding of, and engagement with, the House's scrutiny function, and for clarifying the distinction between Government and Parliament. These two themes inform the House's

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<sup>1</sup> House of Commons Commission Annual Report 2001-02, HC 1002 (2001-02) p 9-10

public information and access work, and provide a basis for new public communication initiatives

The public information and access work of the House Departments covers the following areas:

- 1 Education
- 2 Information enquiries
- 3 Publications
- 4 Media and communications
- 5 Parliamentary broadcasting and webcasting
- 6 Website
- 7 Visiting Parliament
- 8 Other initiatives

1, 5, 6 and 7 are considered as joint areas with the House of Lords.

## **2 Education**

The Parliamentary Education Unit provides the following services for both the House of Commons and the House of Lords:

- Answering enquiries from teachers and young people
- Liaison with educational bodies and organisations
- Visits to schools, teachers' conferences etc
- The provision of resources about Parliament's work

### **2.1 Visits**

The Parliamentary Education Unit offers a range of educational visits for students in years 3 to 10 throughout the year. Visits for older students (Key Stage 4) take place in the autumn and this programme is advertised in the TES each March.

In the 2002-03 financial year 7,500 young people visited Parliament through the Education Service, rising to almost 30,000 by 2007-08. It is anticipated that 37,000 young people will be received by the Education Service in the 2008-09 financial year. 40 schools visit in an average week. Plans for the provision of a dedicated education centre at Westminster will enable the Education Service to receive up to 100,000 learners *per annum*.

The Education Unit actively encourages the participation of students with special needs.

## 2.2 Website

The 'Explore Parliament' website for schools and young people was launched in 1999 and redesigned in August 2003. Constructed with the UK curriculum in mind, it has a number of features designed for on- or off-line use, an extensive Parliamentary database and a range of teacher support resources. A new website, launched in October 2008, marks the beginning of an ambitious programme to create engaging content, including games that teach political literacy.

## 2.3 Publications

*Parliament Explained* booklets<sup>2</sup> outline the work of both Houses and are aimed at students aged 14+. These are useful for a wide range of educational courses, for project work and studies in other areas, such as Citizenship and Queen's Guide Awards.

*An Introduction to Parliament* provides an overview, with more detail provided in six supporting booklets. The Education Unit also produces a range of other support materials, including videos and posters.

## 2.4 Recent developments

- **Outreach and liaison:** The Education Outreach Team trains teachers to increase their knowledge and understanding of Parliament, so that they can teach political literacy and parliamentary democracy with increased confidence and effectiveness. In 2008, the team worked with 1000 teachers. The team also work directly with thousands of students in schools, concentrating in particular on areas where travel to Westminster is a significant issue. Recent and planned visits include Northern Ireland, Scotland, the Orkneys and the Shetland Islands.
- **Citizenship:** The annual Teacher Institute run by the Education Service provides trainee citizenship students with the opportunity to spend a week at Westminster, learning about Parliamentary processes across both Houses and engaging with the work and role of Parliament.
- **Website:** the Explore Parliament website was updated and relaunched in October 2008
- **New publications:** *Introduction to Parliament*; *Wise Up to Parliament* (for ages 8 - 12); *General Elections Explained* (for ages 10 – 13); *Discover Parliament* (for ages 11-16); *Parliament Explained* series (for ages 16-18).

## 2.5 Future plans

- **Pilot travel scheme:** For a limited time, state schools planning to visit Parliament in summer or autumn term 2009 may be eligible to have their travel costs subsidised.
- **Education Centre:** The HC Administration Committee and the HL Information Committee in their reports on *Improving Facilities for Educational Visitors to Parliament*<sup>3</sup> recommended that a dedicated space for educational groups be sought on or off the existing Parliamentary Estate. Both Houses agreed to a motion supporting the recommendations in the reports.<sup>4</sup> Following a detailed feasibility study

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<sup>2</sup> <http://www.explore.parliament.uk/Parliament.aspx?id=363#PEB>

<sup>3</sup> HC Paper 434 2006-07, April 2007; HL Paper 117 2006-07, June 2007.

<sup>4</sup> HC Deb 12 June 2007; HL Deb 16 Oct 2007.

to identify a suitable location, a proposal to put the Education Centre under the House of Commons Chamber was agreed by the HC Administration Committee and the House of Lords Information Committee in May 2008, and by the House of Lords Management Board in June 2008. As the conversion and refurbishment of the proposed location forms part of a larger accommodation strategy, it is not anticipated that work will begin before 2012.

- **Increased Lords' involvement:** From January 2009 a trial programme will invite Peers to meet approximately half the school groups attending the standard education workshops running throughout the year. This will run along side the successful Peers in Schools programme, to further involve Peers in the work of the Education Service

### 3 Information enquiries

The House of Commons Information Office (HCIO) provides the public with information on the work, history and membership of the House of Commons. Its services include:

- an enquiry service by telephone, letter or email;
- a range of information on [www.parliament.uk](http://www.parliament.uk) including FAQs;
- information on visiting Parliament and by-election results;
- production of the Weekly Information Bulletin;<sup>5</sup>
- a series of over 60 factsheets and other publications about the role and work of the House, covering procedure, legislation, Members and more generic material. Available on the internet or in hard copy on request.

#### 3.1 Recent developments

- The HCIO has worked closely with its counterpart in the Lords and in the Webcentre to convert its work from hardcopy only to dual hardcopy and electronic version. The *Parliamentary Calendar* and *Bills Online* are examples of data, once used only in the Weekly Information Bulletin, now produced to allow for the information to be re-cycled and repackaged for an online audience.
- The HCIO takes responsibility for checking online sources of information about Parliament and, where possible, ensuring that the content is up to date and relevant. The best example of this is Wikipedia.
- The HCIO distributes the *Voting Times*, a publication sent by the Commons Speaker on behalf of that House to young people around the time of their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday
- In 2007/08, the HCIO answered 45,017 enquiries from the public on Parliament and its work.

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<sup>5</sup> <http://www.parliament.the-stationery-office.co.uk/pa/cm/cmweb.htm>

### 3.2 Future plans

- HCIO material, previously published in hard copy only, is now available in hardcopy and in electronic version. The HCIO will be looking now at how this information might be used even more widely outside the precincts of the Parliamentary servers.
- Further development of visitor services is anticipated. The HCIO is piloting talks with visitors, about business of the House (such as select committees and question times), who would otherwise be delayed in queues in Westminster Hall or St Stephen's. It is hoped that more such services for visitors to the House will be developed.

## 4 Publications

The House produces a wide range of free explanatory materials for the public, in hard copy and on the Parliament website. These include bulletins about House business, explanatory factsheets about the procedure, legislation, membership and history of the House, and 'Frequently Answered Questions'.

### 4.1 Recent developments

- **Review:** a review of these publications was undertaken to ensure that they met the needs of a wide range of audiences.
- **New design:** A new, more accessible and modern design style has been introduced for all public information materials.

New publications include:

- **A new leaflet** *You and Your MP*, available in 14 languages.<sup>6</sup>
- **A booklet**, *Your Parliament*, (produced in collaboration with the House of Lords and the Hansard Society), which provides a basic introduction to the work of both Houses for a general audience and has been widely distributed.
- **Select Committees now provide explanatory visitor notes** for all members of the public attending select committee evidence sessions. Explanatory notes are also provided for people attending standing committees and debates in Westminster Hall.
- **An updated edition** of the *House of Commons Publication Scheme* (required under the *Freedom of Information Act 2000*) was published in December 2004.<sup>7</sup>
- **Information digest:** Following a recommendation of the Modernisation Committee,<sup>8</sup> a new Commons newsletter is now produced. *Commons Knowledge* provides 'at-a-glance' information about forthcoming business in the Chamber, Westminster Hall and in committees.
- **A wider range of public information materials** is to be developed following the publications review.
- **Select committee video:** a short video explaining and illustrating the role and work of Select Committees of both Houses has been produced.

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<sup>6</sup> [http://www.parliament.uk/directories/hcio/you\\_\\_and\\_your\\_mp.cfm](http://www.parliament.uk/directories/hcio/you__and_your_mp.cfm)

<sup>7</sup> [http://www.parliament.uk/parliamentary\\_publications\\_and\\_archives/foi\\_introduction.cfm](http://www.parliament.uk/parliamentary_publications_and_archives/foi_introduction.cfm)

## 5 Media and communications

In October 2001, the House appointed a Communications Adviser. In October 2003, following a review of select committee staff resources, a Media Officer was recruited specifically to improve the quality and range of media coverage of the work of six select committees (Defence, Foreign Affairs, Public Administration, Constitutional Affairs, Home Affairs, International Development). This was successful and five further posts have since been created to extend support to other select committees, together with an additional support post.

In October 2004 a centrally co-ordinated Media and Communications Service (MCS) was established for the first time.

The Media and Communications Service:

- promotes better public understanding of, and engagement with, the role of the House and its Committees;
- provides a modern, professional media service for journalists and serves as a central point of contact for media enquiries;
- provides media and communications advice and support to all House Departments and Committees;
- works with officials across both Houses to improve public information and access.

There are currently eleven staff in the House of Commons Media and Communications Service: the Media and Communications Adviser, six Select Committee Media Officers, three Media and Communications Officers, and a Media and Communications Assistant.

### 5.1 Recent developments

Improving public understanding of the House's scrutiny function is a priority, as this aspect of the House's work is felt to be less widely understood than some others. Six of the MCS staff focus on actively promoting the work of Select Committees by: providing strategic and tactical advice and support to the Committees on media-related aspects of their work; publicising evidence sessions and reports; liaising with lobby journalists and specialist correspondents to improve awareness of committee work and to highlight and explain the main themes of published reports or evidence sessions; and developing media best practice across a range of committees. An email bulletin notifying journalists of forthcoming business in the House was developed and launched in November 2007, providing direct links to information sources, including Library research papers and Members' own websites.

The House is not a single entity with one clearly definable set of interests and responsibilities. The MCS aims to provide the level of service which journalists expect, while working to the needs and requirements of individual Committees and other service users.

There have been noticeable improvements in the quality and range of media coverage of committee work, not only in the national press and broadcast media but also in the regional press and in specialist publications. See Natzler and Hutton "Select Committees; Scrutiny a la carte?" in *The Future of Parliament: Issues for a new century* ed Philip Giddings, Study of Parliament Group 2005.

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<sup>8</sup> *Connecting Parliament with the Public*, First Report of 2003-04, HC 368 2003-04, para 63

## 5.2 Future plans

- **New post:** Starting in April 2009, to focus on securing more features, factual programming and other explanatory coverage to enhance public understanding of, and engagement with, the work, role and history of the House, and the day to day working lives of Members.

## 6 Parliamentary broadcasting and webcasting

### 6.1 Broadcasting

The arrangements for broadcasting House proceedings, a partnership between Parliament and the major domestic broadcasters, guarantee ‘gavel to gavel’ coverage of both Chambers and of sittings of the House in Westminster Hall. Together this represents a total of more than 80 hours core coverage a week.

Committee television coverage is limited to those meetings which broadcasters consider sufficiently newsworthy to justify the extra costs. On average about a dozen select committee meetings are now televised each week. The deliberations of standing committees do not translate as easily to television and broadcasters rarely request coverage. However, video or audio coverage of all committees which are meeting in public are available on the Parliament website and parliamentary intranet.

### 6.2 Webcasting

A permanent webcasting service was launched in September 2003, as [www.parliamentlive.tv](http://www.parliamentlive.tv). The service, part funded by the House of Lords, builds on a pilot which went live in January 2002, streaming to the internet live audio-visual coverage of the House of Commons, House of Lords, sittings in Westminster Hall and a number of select and standing committee meetings.

### 6.3 Recent developments

- **Comprehensive live coverage:** following a review it was agreed that webcasting should be expanded. There is now live coverage of all proceedings in both Houses, including all Select and Standing Committees meeting in public. As many as 18 live streams are available simultaneously. Coverage of debates in the chambers of both Houses, sittings in Westminster Hall and up to four committees at a time receive full audio-visual coverage; other committees meeting in public are covered in audio only. There is some captioning to help identification of speakers in the two Chambers, links to visitor notes for committee meetings and a 28 day on-demand archive. In 2007/08, the Broadcasting Unit increased online coverage of committees through the installation of webcams in eight committee rooms, following a successful trial in 2006/07. The webcams allow more committees to have both visual and audio coverage.
- **Interactive tours:** A new series of interactive virtual tours was launched in October 2007. The series, developed jointly with the Commons and the Lords Service, allows users to take a virtual tour of the Commons and Lords Chambers, the Lords Library and Westminster Hall, and allows the user to find out more detailed information by clicking on “hotspots”.



## 6.4 Future plans

- **Video archive:** Further work is expected to take place to make archived footage available as an academic research tool in 2008/09.

## 7 Website

The main parliamentary website [www.parliament.uk](http://www.parliament.uk) was redesigned and relaunched in summer 2002, with the aim of providing a more modern and attractive design for the most widely used pages, and improved navigation. An independent review by the British Web Design and Marketing Association that year compared the site with Government sites from other countries and described it as “the best example of ‘open government’ adoption of internet technologies that we have seen.”]

There are over 9,000 pages hosted directly on the Commons site alone, and over a million pages of linked publications.

Since the redesign there has been a steady increase in use of the [www.parliament.uk](http://www.parliament.uk) site, with nearly 49 million hits in 2007/08.

However, it is widely recognised that the site serves the needs of some audiences more effectively than others. While it is an important research tool for specialist users who seek specific documents or other detailed information, it is less well geared to the needs of the more general user.

### 7.1 Recent developments and work in progress

During 2007/08, enhancements to the Parliament website included

- **A new calendar** collating Parliamentary business
- **Biographical information** on Members
- **Select committee** pages improved; a news page, with daily changing content linked to a new forward calendar of committee meetings
- **A new search engine**, which improved the success of searches from 22% to 88%
- **Translations** of “About Parliament” webpages in Welsh and Scots Gaelic
- **Legislation:** Building on the creation of a single webpage for each Bill in 2006/07, further improvements in 2007/08 included a clearer visual guide to the progress of a Bill, provisional dates for further stages, and a clear summary of the Bill
- **Email alerts:** a new email alerting service, to which users can subscribe to receive notifications of changes to selected pages, was introduced in February 2005.
- **User research:** research on how the site could better reach out to young people and other target audiences was commissioned by both Houses. This work, conducted by Optimum Web in spring 2007, helped define further improvements in 2007/08 and beyond.
- **Deposited Papers Database:** Both Houses have combined and rationalised their system for receiving and archiving documents deposited by ministers in their

respective Libraries. These are now available electronically through the website, making them easily accessible to the public for the first time.

- **Major upgrade:** The Parliamentary Information Management Services project (PIMS), an online index to parliamentary information for internal users, allows the libraries of both Houses to provide Members of both Houses and their staff with a comprehensive full-text information service, equipped with a powerful search engine. PIMS is the system from which the publicly available 'Parliamentary Data' derives its information.
- **Expansion:** In 2007/08, the Web Centre team expanded its website editorial team to help ensure the website carries the latest information on Parliamentary activity. It is now updated five times a day when the House is sitting, and once a day at other times. *Hansard* is now available approximately three hours behind real time.

## 7.2 Future plans

A number of incremental enhancements to the website include more inward links to the site, progress towards a higher level of RNIB certification, a glossary of parliamentary terms, and further use of e-consultation. Enhancements to legislation tracking, including a single reference page for the progress of all Bills, are planned.

## 8 Visiting Parliament

Every year, an estimated 430,000 people visit Parliament, either to meet their MP, take a guided tour, or watch debates in the Chamber or select committee evidence sessions.

### 8.1 Recent developments and work in progress

- **Visitor Services Team:** Since 2005 the Central Tours Office runs a team of Visitor Assistants to provide an improved welcome to visitors, prioritise access, manage queues to the public galleries, give information about parliamentary business, assist with tours, operate the Summer Opening, and help to deliver the schools' visits programme of the Parliamentary Education Service. The team increased to support these functions and the opening of the new Cromwell Green Entrance in April 2008, and again from October 2008, to be on duty in the evenings until both Houses have risen. The Central Tours Office and the Visitor Assistant Team make up the Visitor Services section, numbering 37 staff.
- **Summer Opening:** in the summer of 2001, Parliament opened to the public for guided tours on an experimental basis, and these have now become a permanent feature of the services provided for visitors. In summer 2008, despite an increase in ticket price from £7 to £12, visitors totalled 90, 878.
- **Jubilee Cafeteria:** the Jubilee Cafeteria was opened in May 2002, to provide visitors to Parliament with light refreshments and a rest area in a welcoming environment. Previously there had been no dedicated visitor facilities.
- **Retail:** in 2003 a retail manager was appointed to develop a retail marketing strategy that incorporates commercial, educational and information objectives, and to develop new ranges of merchandise. In 2007/08 retail sales increased by 6.6% from the previous session, to over £1 million.
- **Improved signage and access:** a major study of signage in and around the parliamentary estate has been carried out with the aim of improving both the directions

and the information provided to visitors and others. A staged implementation plan has been initiated.

- **Exhibitions:** a number of exhibitions have been held in Westminster Hall. Two major exhibitions were organised by the Curator's Office and the Parliamentary Archives respectively, to mark the anniversaries of the 1807 abolition of the transatlantic slave trade, and the 1707 Act of Union between England and Scotland. A further exhibition was held charting the history and background of the historic hall. Each exhibition ran for around three months and was open to the public. The Act of Union exhibition transferred to the Scottish Parliament. .
- **Disability Access:** the new Cromwell Green entrance is equipped with a wheelchair ramp. All tours are accessible by wheelchair users. Alternative routes and viewing points exist for visitors with large motorised wheelchairs. The public galleries of both Houses and committee rooms are fully accessible. Disabled toilets are located off Central Lobby and at the Jubilee Café. Guide dogs can accompany their owners on tours, in the public galleries and committee rooms. An interpreter (BSL signer) is available to accompany a tour. Parliament staff will arrange this, through the Royal National Institute for Deaf People (RNID), if given advance warning.

Despite the current security climate, and the challenges this creates for the House's visitor access, the number of visitors remains fairly constant. In 2004, there were 136,156 visits<sup>9</sup> to the House of Commons Gallery; in 2007/08, 150,712.

The total number of visitors has risen year on year to around 985,000 in 2008. This includes those visiting in connection with House business, such as officials and committee witnesses; invited guests of Members; those attending banqueting events; lobby groups; and visitors to the public galleries.<sup>10</sup>

## 8.2 Future plans

- **Review of Visitor Management:** The recent review by the Parliamentary Visitor Board covers three areas: the direction of the visitor route, management of demand and management of capacity. The Board reported to the Administration Committee in the Commons, and to the House Committee in the Lords, in February 2009. The review found that:
  - The Cromwell Green Entrance has improved the security of access; the quality of welcome; and the capacity of handling (500 per hour).
  - The number of visitors and security requirements has risen since the new entrance was planned. Delays and queues occur at peak times. The problem is mainly due to peaks in visitor arrivals, particularly at times when meetings and banqueting events coincide. An increase in capacity of other entrances could help, as could measures to spread arrival times. Weekend opening could also spread or increase capacity, but could have cost and works programme implications.
  - The new route makes better use of Westminster Hall, providing better initial impact and a valuable "information hub". The use of this route will continue.

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<sup>9</sup> Financial year 2003-04

<sup>10</sup> *Visitor management Review*, Visitor Management Board, February 2009

The report recommends a feasibility study of an enhanced search facility at Black Rod's garden entrance as a long term solution to the demand for prompt and efficient visitor entrance.

## 9 Hansard Society Projects

In 2002, the House granted £50,000 per year for three years to the Hansard Society to help fund outreach projects which complement initiatives organised by the House itself.<sup>11</sup>

**HeadsUp** ([www.headsup.org.uk](http://www.headsup.org.uk)) is an online resource to promote political awareness and participation among young people. Its centrepiece is a moderated online forum where students debate topical issues related to the work of Parliament.

The Youth Citizenship Commission was set up following on from the *Governance of Britain*<sup>12</sup> report in 2007, to look at ways of developing young people's understanding of citizenship and increasing their participation in politics. The HeadsUp forum - *Youth Citizenship Commission: Are young people allergic to politics?* - took place between 17 November and 5 December 2008. This HeadsUp debate was the most popular ever, with young people discussing what they don't like about politics, how it can be more child friendly, and what can be done to promote politics to young people.<sup>13</sup>

**Hansard Scholars Programme** provides opportunities for under- and postgraduates, and for professionals, to gain experience through internships in the offices of MPs and Peers.

**Parliament and the Public: Knowledge, interest and perceptions** was published in November 2008.<sup>14</sup> Key findings include: Just 32% of the public say that they feel they 'have a good understanding of the way Parliament works'. A much smaller proportion say that they know about the House of Lords (26%) than the House of Commons (42%). The two components of Parliament's work with which the public feel most familiar are Prime Minister's Questions and how laws are made, with 46% saying that they know either 'a great deal' or 'a fair amount'. Only half of the public appear to be able to distinguish between government and Parliament. Even among those who recognise that they are separate entities, there is confusion as to exactly what that difference is:

Some of these findings – particularly vis-à-vis knowledge and understanding – are unquestionably troubling. On a more positive note, others suggest that, contrary to popular belief, most people are not completely apathetic about Parliament. A majority of the public appear to have an interest in and a high regard for the institution even if it does not currently live up to their expectations and ideals.<sup>15</sup>

On 18<sup>th</sup> November 2008 the House of Lords held a debate on a motion to call attention to the case for enhancing Parliament's ability to communicate with members of the public.<sup>16</sup>

Lord Norton of Louth: There are two points that inform my recommendations. The first is that we need to go further to keep pace with what is happening outside Westminster. There are significant changes in the very nature of

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<sup>11</sup> For further information see the Hansard Society website at <http://www.hansard-society.org.uk/>

<sup>12</sup> *The Governance of Britain*, Cm 7170 2006-07, p. 8

<sup>13</sup> <http://www.hansardsociety.org.uk/>

<sup>14</sup> <http://www.hansardsociety.org.uk/files/folders/downloads/entry1566.aspx>

<sup>15</sup> *Parliament And the Public*, Hansard Society, November 2008, p 4

<sup>16</sup> HL Debates, 18<sup>th</sup> December 2008, cc. 965 - 977

politics. Some people are losing interest in politics; others are not losing interest but rather diverting their attention away from political parties to interest groups. There has been a phenomenal growth in the number of interest groups over the past 40 years. The membership of political parties has seen a major decline as the membership of interest groups has increased. We need to be in a position to engage both with those who come together to form particular groups and those individuals who believe that politics, and what Parliament does, is not for them. There have also been major changes in the means available for communication, especially electronic means. We have exploited those means to some degree, but we need to go further and ideally be ahead of other organisations in communicating with the public.

The second, and in many respects consequential, point is that communication should not be seen as flowing only in one direction. The emphasis has been on making material available to those who wish to access it. There has been less attention given to enabling members of the public to communicate with Parliament. We put information in the public domain, but we do not necessarily create the means for the public to respond to that material. I quote again from the Puttnam Commission report:

“Where the public expect institutions to be responsive to their concerns, Parliament provides almost no opportunities for direct voter involvement, interaction or feedback”.

It is essential that we see communication as a two-way process, and not one where we are simply ensuring that people can follow what we are doing.

In looking at changes, we can therefore consider them under the headings of “opening up Parliament to the public” and “enabling members of the public to communicate with Parliament”.

...

Lord Grocott: ... If we are to improve the way in which we communicate with the public, and the public’s perception of us, most of the work necessary to achieve this will have to be done by parliamentarians. You cannot subcontract it. MPs do an awful lot of work with their constituents, in advice bureaux, in offering information and in enabling visits to Parliament, and the same applies to Peers. Many noble Lords do an awful lot of work in that respect. We should certainly commend the outreach work that the Lord Speaker does. There is no better advertisement for Parliament than parliamentarians talking to the public about the work that they do. That is the case with most of us at any rate. We need to strengthen the outreach work to which the noble Lord, Lord Norton, referred.

## 10 Sources

This note has been compiled from a wide range of sources, including internal documents and papers. The main regular published sources for information about these programmes and initiatives include the annual reports of the House of Commons Commission,<sup>17</sup> and occasional reports from the Modernisation<sup>18</sup> and Administration<sup>19</sup> Select Committees.

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<sup>17</sup> [http://www.parliament.uk/about\\_commons/house\\_of\\_commons\\_commission\\_/workinfo.cfm](http://www.parliament.uk/about_commons/house_of_commons_commission_/workinfo.cfm)

<sup>18</sup> <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm/cmmodern.htm>

<sup>19</sup> <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm/cmadmin.htm>