



Ballot for the election of Members of the Backbench Business Committee

This note describes the practical arrangements for the ballot for the election of the Members of the Backbench Business Committee under the Order of the House of 15 June 2010.

Election of Committee Members

Nominations

1. Nominations must be received in writing in the Lower Table Office between 10am and 5pm on Monday 28 June 2010 (the day before the election). Nomination forms will be available in advance from the Table Office and the Vote Office but need not be used, provided that in all respects nominations meet the provisions of the Order of the House. To be valid, nominations must contain a signed statement made by the candidate declaring their willingness to stand for election, accompanied by the signatures of not fewer than 12 nor more than 15 Members.
2. As soon as possible after the close of nominations, the list of candidates and their sponsors will be placed in the Vote Office in the Members' Lobby and published on the intranet.

The Ballot

3. **The ballot will be held in the division lobbies between 10am and 12noon on Tuesday 29 June.** Members with surnames A to K should vote in the Aye Lobby, entering by the doors behind the Speaker's Chair; Members with surnames starting L to Z should vote in the No Lobby, entering by the doors off the Members' Lobby. Only those entrances to each lobby will be open. Members will have their name recorded at temporary division desks before being issued with a ballot paper from a table further down the lobby. Members should approach the division desks in three queues as follows:

In the Aye Lobby: surnames beginning with A to C
 surnames beginning with D to G
 surnames beginning with H to K

In the No Lobby: surnames beginning with L to O
 surnames beginning with P to S
 surnames beginning with T to Z.

4. Any Member on the Parliamentary Estate but incapacitated from voting in the lobbies may ask for a Clerk to obtain a ballot paper in the lobby on their behalf, bring it to the Member, and return to cast it for them in the ballot box. Members who need to use this service should make such a request in writing or by email to Chris Stanton, Clerk of Divisions, Public Bill Office (stantonc@parliament.uk). Requests should arrive not later than one hour before the ballot opens. As is the case with all other votes in the House, proxy voting is not possible.
5. The ballot paper will give the names of candidates in alphabetical order. Members should complete the ballot paper at one of the stations erected in the lobby, and then deposit it in one of the ballot boxes at the exit.
6. Members each have one vote, which is transferable. They place candidates in their preferred order using the figures '1', '2', '3', etc. The figure '1' represents the vote and is mandatory. The rest are contingency markings and are optional but allow the elector to influence the final result. Members should therefore express preferences until they are unable, or do not wish, to differentiate between any of the remaining candidates.
7. At 12noon the ballot will be closed and the entrance doors to the lobbies will be locked. All Members in the lobbies when the doors are locked will be allowed to vote.

The Count

8. The ballot will be counted under the Single Transferable Vote system. The votes are counted with reference to a quota, which is the number of votes a candidate requires to be elected. The quota is the number of valid votes cast divided by the number of places to be filled plus one (8 in this election).

9. Any candidate elected with more votes than the quota has surplus votes transferred to the remaining candidates in proportion to the next stated preferences on the elected candidate's ballot papers.
10. Votes cast for a candidate who is excluded from the ballot with the lowest number of votes at a stage in the count are transferred using the next stated preferences on those ballot papers.
11. The Order of the House of 15 June provides that constraints shall be applied to the count so that:
 - the membership corresponds to the party composition determined by Mr Speaker which, including the Chair, shall reflect as closely as possible the composition of the House; and
 - at least two women and two men shall be elected.
12. On 23 June, following the election of the Chair of the Backbench Business Committee, the Speaker announced that, in addition to the Chair, the Committee would be composed of 4 Conservative Members, 2 Labour and one Liberal Democrat. Nominations may be received only in respect of Members of these parties.
13. If a continuing candidate cannot be elected because of the constraints above, then the candidate's votes are transferred according to the next stated preferences on the papers.
14. The constraints will be applied at the count, so there is no obligation on Members to vote for candidates from particular parties, or for both a man and a woman.

Contacts

For further information please contact the House of Commons Information Office, 020 7219 4272 or the House of Commons Media Office, 020 7219 0969.