



Liaison Committee

House of Commons London SW1A 0AA

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From Dr Sarah Wollaston MP, Chair

Rt. Hon. Andrea Leadsom MP

Leader of the House

House of Commons

19 June 2018

Dear Andrea

Changing Committee practice and procedure: enhancing effective working

Thank you for your letter of 14 June. I am delighted to hear that you accept the recommendations of the Committee's report on *Changing Committee practice and procedure: enhancing effective working*.

I am writing to offer you the reassurance you sought in relation to the proposal for committee chairs to be able to nominate a member of their staff to attend private committee meetings, subject to the agreement of the committee.


You suggest that the Liaison Committee evaluate the contribution of new arrangements to committee effectiveness, and this is something that we commit to do towards the end of the Session. This would clearly be necessary to inform any decision about whether to extend to pilot or put arrangements on a more permanent footing.

You also highlight that robust safeguards should be in place to ensure the confidentiality of committee information and to ensure that all members of the committee are content with any new arrangement. Once the House has agreed to the pilot the Liaison Committee will agree a resolution setting out the details of the rules which will apply and I will issue a communication to all committees to set out how the Liaison Committee expects the pilot to operate. As well as highlighting that new arrangements are subject to the unanimous agreement of all members of the committee, the resolution will also make explicit that if a member joins a committee she or he must be made aware of the arrangement and given the opportunity to approve or object.

I will also remind Chairs that they are accountable for the actions of their staff in respect of the confidentiality of private committee deliberations. I have requested that specific guidance is made available to the staff themselves to help ensure that they understand the confidentiality of committee proceedings.

I am very grateful to you for your support in taking forward these enhancements to committee working. I would like to add my name against any motion when tabled, as would a large proportion of members of the Liaison Committee. If your team could let the Liaison Clerk know when the motions are being tabled, she will be able to make the necessary arrangements to add names.

Best wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sarah', with a large, stylized initial 'S' that loops around the start of the name.

Dr Sarah Wollaston MP, Chair of the Committee