



HOUSE COMMITTEE

MINUTES

11 December 2012

Present:

L. Alderdice
L. Campbell-Savours
L. Craig of Radley
B. D'Souza (Chairman)
B. Hollis of Heigham
L. Laming
L. McNally
B. Royall of Blaisdon
L. Sewel
L. Strathclyde
L. True
L. Wakeham

together with the Clerk of the Parliaments.

Also present: Benet Hiscock (Director of Public Information), David Leakey (Black Rod), Andrew Makower (Finance Director), Peter Mason (Parliamentary Security Director), Jonathan Smith (Head of Finance), Rhodri Walters (Reading Clerk) and Carl Woodall (Director of Facilities).

1. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The Committee *agreed* the minutes of the last meeting.

2. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

3. TRAVEL EXPENSES: REASONABLE ROUTE

The Committee discussed the memorandum by the Finance Director (H/12-13/11) RESERVED. The Committee *agreed* the Finance Director's recommendations to:

- add to the Guide to Financial Support for Members in relation to claiming travel expenses: "The timing of arrival at / departure from Westminster relative to attendance is a matter for the member";
- confirm the current working definition of a reasonable route, namely one which fits in with the usual pattern of a member's direct route to and from the House. Claims for travel by an indirect route may give rise to correspondence, and may be turned down. However, discretion may be applied, and not every indirect route is unreasonable; and

- add to the claim form a declaration that travel claimed for was for the purpose of attending the House.

The Committee *agreed* an amended version of the recommendation in paragraph 14(c) as follows:

“(c) To agree that members may break their journeys by up to a maximum of one night, provided that the *total* journey is:

- (i) a ~~direct~~ reasonable route “between a registered residential address and Westminster”;

The Committee *agreed* to amend the Guide in accordance with the agreed recommendations and to review the operation of the new provisions next year.

4. SAVINGS AND FINANCIAL PLAN

The Committee discussed the memorandum by the Finance Director (H/12-13/12) RESERVED. The Committee *agreed*:

- the extension of the savings target to 2015/16;
- the forecast outturn for 2012/13 and the technical Supplementary Estimate;
- the Estimate for 2013/14 and the Financial Plan to 2016.

5. SECURITY CONTRACT REVIEW

The Parliamentary Security Director presented his paper (H/12-13/13) RESERVED. Following discussion, the Committee *took note*.

6. AUDIT COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

The Committee *agreed* the recommendations in the paper by the Clerk of the Parliaments (H/12-13/14) RESERVED to confirm that members of the Audit Committee should be appointed for four-year terms and to appoint Liz Hewitt as an external member of the Committee.

7. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The question of what copies of the report of the Leveson Inquiry were provided to members by the House was raised. It was asked why the House had provided members only with copies of the executive summary of the report rather than the full report without the evidence volumes. The Clerk of the Parliaments explained that it was not possible to buy only the first volume of the report, and in any case, all four volumes contained the actual text of the report as opposed to evidence transcripts. The choice was, therefore, between the full four volumes of the report for £250 or the executive summary for £16. The Administration had decided to make the executive summary available to members and to provide a limited number of copies of the full report in the Library of the House. The full report was also available online, free of charge.

A paper by the Clerk of the Parliaments recommending the appointment of Baroness Cohen of Pimlico to the Audit Committee in place of Lord Tomlinson was circulated after the meeting and was *agreed* by correspondence ([H/12-13/15](#)).

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James Whittle
020 7219 6644
whittlej@parliament.uk