



House of Commons
Liaison Committee

Formal Minutes

Session 2008–09

The Liaison Committee

The Liaison Committee is appointed to consider general matters relating to the work of select committees; to advise the House of Commons Commission on select committees; to choose select committee reports for debate in the House and to hear evidence from the Prime Minister on matters of public policy.

Current membership

Mr Alan Williams MP (*Labour, Swansea West*) (Chairman)

The Chairmen for the time being of the Select Committees listed below:

Administration – Mr Frank Doran MP (*Labour, Aberdeen North*)
 Business, Innovation and Skills – Peter Luff MP (*Conservative, Mid Worcestershire*)
 Children, Schools and Families – Mr Barry Sheerman MP (*Labour/Co-op, Huddersfield*)
 Communities and Local Government – Dr Phyllis Starkey MP (*Labour, Milton Keynes South West*)
 Culture, Media and Sport – Mr John Whittingdale MP (*Conservative, Maldon and Chelmsford East*)
 Defence – Mr James Arbuthnot MP (*Conservative, North East Hampshire*)
 Energy and Climate Change – Mr Elliot Morley (*Labour, Scunthorpe*)
 Environmental Audit – Mr Tim Yeo MP (*Conservative, South Suffolk*)
 Environment, Food and Rural Affairs – Mr Michael Jack MP (*Conservative, Fylde*)
 European Scrutiny – Michael Connarty MP (*Labour, Linlithgow and East Falkirk*)
 Finance and Services – Sir Stuart Bell MP (*Labour, Middlesborough*)
 Foreign Affairs – Mike Gapes MP (*Labour/Co-op, Ilford South*)
 Health – Mr Kevin Barron MP (*Labour, Rother Valley*)
 Home Affairs – Keith Vaz MP (*Labour, Leicester East*)
 Human Rights (Joint Committee) – Mr Andrew Dismore MP (*Labour, Hendon*)
 International Development – Malcolm Bruce MP (*Liberal Democrat, Gordon*)
 Justice – Sir Alan Beith MP (*Liberal Democrat, Berwick-upon-Tweed*)
 Members' Allowances – Mr Don Touhig (*Labour, Islwyn*)
 Northern Ireland Affairs – Sir Patrick Cormack MP (*Conservative, South Staffordshire*)
 Procedure – Mr Greg Knight MP (*Conservative, Yorkshire East*)
 Public Accounts – Mr Edward Leigh MP (*Conservative, Gainsborough*)
 Public Administration – Dr Tony Wright MP (*Labour, Cannock Chase*)
 Regulatory Reform – Andrew Miller MP (*Labour, Ellesmere Port and Neston*)
 Science and Technology – Mr Phil Willis MP (*Liberal Democrat, Harrogate and Knaresborough*)
 Scottish Affairs – Mr Mohammad Sarwar MP (*Labour, Glasgow Central*)
 Selection – Rosemary McKenna MP (*Labour Cumbernauld, Kilsyth and Kirkintilloch East*)
 Standards and Privileges – Mr David Curry MP (*Conservative,*)
 Statutory Instruments – David Maclean MP (*Conservative, Penrith and The Border*)
 Transport – Mrs Louise Ellman MP (*Labour/Co-op, Liverpool Riverside*)
 Treasury – John McFall MP (*Labour/Co-op, West Dunbartonshire*)
 Welsh Affairs – Dr Hywel Francis MP (*Labour, Aberavon*)
 Work and Pensions – Mr Terry Rooney MP (*Labour, Bradford North*)

Powers

The powers of the Committee are set out in House of Commons SO No 145. These are available on the Internet via www.parliament.uk.

Publications

The Reports and evidence of the Committee are published by The Stationery Office by Order of the House. All publications of the Committee (including press notices) are on the Internet at www.parliament.uk/parliamentary_committees/liaison_committee.cfm.

Committee staff

The current staff of the Committee are Jacqy Sharpe (Clerk), Robert Wilson (Second Clerk), Kevin Candy (Senior Committee Assistant) and Lee Chiddicks (Committee Assistant).

Contacts

All correspondence should be addressed to the Clerks of the Liaison Committee, House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA. The telephone number for general enquiries is 020 72195675; the Committee's email address is liaisoncommittee@parliament.uk

Proceedings of the Committee

Thursday 29 January 2009

Members present:

Mr Alan Williams, in the Chair

Mr James Arbuthnot	Mr Edward Leigh
Sir Alan Beith	Peter Luff
Malcolm Bruce	John McFall
Michael Connarty	Andrew Miller
Sir Patrick Cormack	Mr Elliot Morley
Mr Andrew Dismore	Mr Mohammad Sarwar
Mrs Louise Ellman	Keith Vaz
Dr Hywel Francis	Mr John Whittingdale
Mike Gapes	Mr Phil Willis
Mr Michael Jack	Mr Tim Yeo

1. Westminster Hall debates

The Committee considered this matter.

2. Evidence from the Prime Minister

The Committee considered this matter.

3. Overseas travel by select committees

The Committee considered this matter.

Resolved, that, for financial year 2009-10, the Committee allocate a maximum of 70 per cent of the total overseas travel budget for travel occurring between April to the end of October 2009.

[In accordance with the Committee's decision, funding for overseas travel approved by the Chairman is given in the Annex to these minutes.]

[Adjourned till Thursday 12 February at 9.45am]

Annex

In accordance with the Committee's decision of 31 January 2008, the Chairman approved the following overseas visits:

Occurring in financial year 2008-09

Foreign Affairs Committee to the Middle East, for its inquiry into global security, at a cost not exceeding £29,891;

Health Committee to New Zealand, for its inquiry into patient safety, at a cost not exceeding £69,701;

Home Affairs Committee to Prague, for its inquiries into human trafficking and drugs, at a cost not exceeding £14,489; and

Northern Ireland Affairs to Dublin, for its inquiry into cross-border co-operation, at a cost not exceeding £5,171.

Occurring in financial year 2009-10

Business and Enterprise Committee to Saudi Arabia and United Arab Emirates, for its inquiry into exporting out of recession, at a cost not exceeding £48,224;

Children, Schools and Families Committee to Washington DC and New York, for its inquiries into school accountability and social worker training, at a cost not exceeding £55,712;

Culture, Media and Sport Committee to Washington DC, Albany and New York, for its inquiry into press standards, privacy and libel, at a cost not exceeding £57,861;

Defence Committee to Washington DC and Tampa, for meetings with the new US administration and with Congress, at a cost not exceeding £57,0387;

Defence Committee to Pakistan and Afghanistan, for scrutiny of UK Armed Forces deployments overseas and its inquiries into rotary capability and the comprehensive approach, at a cost not exceeding £53,611;

Energy and Climate Change Committee to Germany and Denmark, for its inquiry into the green economy and low carbon technologies, at a cost not exceeding £27,654;

Environmental Audit Committee to Washington DC and San Francisco, for its inquiry into international carbon trading, at a cost not exceeding £46,928;

Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Committee to Brazil, for its inquiry into the contribution that Defra can make to resolving world food security issues, at a cost not exceeding £55,971;

European Scrutiny Committee to Croatia, as part of the normal pattern of visits to countries prior to their accession to the European Union, at a cost not exceeding £12,414.

European Scrutiny Committee to Sweden, for discussions with the institutions of each EU Member State before it takes over the Presidency, at a cost not exceeding £22,848;

Foreign Affairs Committee to Pakistan and Afghanistan, for its inquiry into global security: Afghanistan, at a cost not exceeding £59,520;

Foreign Affairs Committee to Washington DC and Tampa, for its inquiry into global security: USA, at a cost not exceeding £57,951;

Foreign Affairs Committee to Sweden, for discussions regarding Sweden's strategy for its presidency and a range of current EU-related issues, to Estonia, for meetings focussing on relations with Russia, NATO and the development of EU foreign and security policies, and to the Balkans, to seek contact at a senior level with KFOR, the EU and UN missions, the Kosovo government and representatives of the Kosovo-Serb community, at a cost not exceeding £29,119;

Home Affairs Committee to Ecuador and Peru, for its inquiry into the cocaine trade, at a cost not exceeding £49,332;

Innovation, Universities, Science and Skills Committee to Washington DC, for its current inquiries 'putting science and engineering at the heart of government policy' and students and universities, at a cost not exceeding £41,324;

International Development Committee to Nigeria, for its inquiry into urbanisation and poverty, at a cost not exceeding £49,425;

Joint Committee on Human Rights to Washington DC and New York, for its inquiry into business and human rights, at a cost not exceeding £25,231;

Justice Committee to South Africa, for its inquiry into the role of the prison officer, at a cost not exceeding £48,051;

Northern Ireland Affairs to Dublin, to meet with various interlocutors in relation to policing and criminal justice issues, at a cost not exceeding £10,663;

Committee of Public Accounts to Czech Republic, for meetings with the Czech Supreme Audit Office and the Committee's counterparts in the Czech Parliament, at a cost not exceeding £8,750;

Public Administration Committee to The Hague, for its inquiries into civil service issues, at a cost not exceeding £11,095;

Transport Committee to Portland or Seattle and Washington DC, for its inquiries into 'the major road network' and 'the future of aviation', at a cost not exceeding £49,613;

Treasury Committee to Chicago, Washington DC and New York, for its continuing inquiry into the banking crisis, at a cost not exceeding £59,043;

Welsh Affairs Committee to Baltic ports, for its inquiries into digital inclusion and ports, at a cost not exceeding £17,737; and

Work and Pensions Committee to Canada, for its inquiry into tackling pensioner poverty, at a cost not exceeding £55,083.

Thursday 12 February 2009

Members present:

Mr Alan Williams, in the Chair

Sir Alan Beith	John McFall
Malcolm Bruce	Andrew Miller
Michael Connarty	Mr Elliot Morley
Sir Patrick Cormack	Mr Mohammad Sarwar
Mr Andrew Dismore	Mr Barry Sheerman
Mrs Louise Ellman	Dr Phyllis Starkey
Mike Gapes	Keith Vaz
Mr Michael Jack	Mr Phil Willis
Mr Edward Leigh	Dr Tony Wright
Peter Luff	Sir George Young.

1. Oral evidence with the Prime Minister

Oral evidence was heard from Rt Hon. Gordon Brown MP, the Prime Minister.

[Adjourned till Thursday 5 March 2009 at 9.30am

Thursday 5 March 2009

Members present:

Mr Alan Williams, in the Chair

Sir Alan Beith	John McFall
Michael Connarty	Andrew Miller
Sir Patrick Cormack	Mr Barry Sheerman
Mr Andrew Dismore	Mr Don Touhig
Mrs Louise Ellman	Mr John Whittingdale
Dr Hywel Francis	Mr Phil Willis
Mr Michael Jack	Sir George Young.
Mr Edward Leigh	

1. Westminster Hall debates

The Committee considered this matter.

2 (a) Unauthorised disclosure of select committee papers

The Committee considered this matter.

Resolved, that, subject always to the right of a Committee to make a Special Report to the House, committees should henceforth consider whether there was good reason to conclude that the use of the power given to the Committee on Standards and Privileges to require Members to give evidence might lead to the discovery of the source or cause of the disclosure, in considering whether to make a Special Report on an unauthorised disclosure.

(b) Leak from the Culture, Media and Sport Committee

The Committee considered a letter from the Chairman of the Culture, Media and Sport Committee regarding a leak of a draft Heads of Report.

The Committee *agreed* that the leak seemed to constitute a substantial interference with the work of the Culture, Media and Sport Committee and that therefore in its opinion a Special Report would be appropriate.

3. The work of committees in Session 2007–08

The draft Report [*The work of Committees in Session 2007–08*] was *agreed to*; the Formal Minutes relating to the consideration of the Report were published in the First Report of the Liaison Committee, Session 2008–09, HC 291, p.66.

4. Tabling of amendments by committees

Ordered, That the Chairman write to the Procedure Committee to invite it to consider the tabling of amendments to Bills by select committees.

5. 30th Anniversary of departmental select committees

The Committee *agreed* to sponsor an event on 23 June 2009.

[Adjourned till Thursday 14 May 2009 at 9.30am

Thursday 14 May 2009

Members present:

Mr Alan Williams, in the Chair

Mr James Arbuthnot	Peter Luff
Sir Alan Beith	John McFall
Mr Malcolm Bruce	Andrew Miller
Michael Connarty	Dr Phyllis Starkey
Sir Patrick Cormack	Keith Vaz
Mr Andrew Dismore	Mr John Whittingdale
Mrs Louise Ellman	Mr Phil Willis
Mike Gapes	Dr Tony Wright
Mr Edward Leigh	Sir George Young

1. Westminster Hall debates

The Committee considered this matter.

2. Parliament and Government Finance: the Alignment Project

The Committee considered this matter.

3. Green Book principles: allowances for committee travel

The Committee considered this matter.

4. Pre-legislative scrutiny

Ordered, That the Chairman write to the Leader of the House to express the Committee's disappointment at the outcome of the consultation on the scrutiny arrangements for the draft Bribery Bill.

5. Post-legislative scrutiny

The Committee considered this matter.

6. Circulation of select committee papers

The Committee *agreed* the following arrangements for circulation of papers to Members:

- i. General papers are normally posted to Members in hard-copy but several committees have recently agreed to have their papers (particularly written evidence) circulated by email, by CD-Rom or by using a shared drive with controlled access rights.
- ii. Sensitive papers, in particular draft reports or evidence which is security classified, will not be circulated by electronic means, save in exceptional circumstances. Committee staff will draw Members' attention to any parts of their committee's proceedings which would be damaging if disclosed without full authority of the committee.
- iii. Sensitive documents, the leaking of which might be damaging to a committee, will be marked "In Confidence—for the use of the Committee only". Such documents and their envelopes will be enclosed in a second envelope for circulation. The inner envelope will be addressed to the Member and be marked "In confidence—to be opened by the addressee only". Where electronic distribution is demanded by exceptional circumstances, steps (such as password protection) will be taken to guard against unauthorised access or distribution.
- iv. It is the responsibility of Members to ensure the security of all committee papers received by post and electronically. Committee teams can be asked to send papers via a named person on a Member's staff who is responsible to the Member for respecting their confidentiality. However, such arrangements will not cover draft reports or other papers deemed sensitive by the Chairman or the clerk of a committee. These will be circulated to Members personally in double envelopes, as above, and not sent by email.

[Adjourned till Thursday 25 June 2009 at 9.30am

Thursday 25 June 2009

Members present:

Mr Alan Williams, in the Chair

Sir Alan Beith	Rosemary McKenna
Mr Malcolm Bruce	Andrew Miller
Michael Connarty	Mr Mohammad Sarwar
Mr Andrew Dismore	Mr Barry Sheerman
Mr Frank Doran	Dr Phyllis Starkey
Mrs Louise Ellman	Mr Don Touhig
Dr Hywel Francis	Keith Vaz
Mike Gapes	Mr John Whittingdale
Mr Greg Knight	Mr Phil Willis
Peter Luff	Sir George Young
John McFall	

1. Westminster Hall debates

The Committee considered this matter.

2. Evidence from the Prime Minister: Suggested Structure for Questioning

The Committee considered this matter.

3. Parliament and Government Finance: the Alignment Project

The draft Report [*Financial Scrutiny: Parliamentary Control over Government Budgets*] was *agreed to*; the Formal Minutes relating to the consideration of the Report were published in the Second Report of the Liaison Committee, Session 2008–09, HC 804, p. 47.

4. Government Response to the Committee's First Report of Session 2008-09

The draft Report [*The work of committees in 2007–08: Government Response to the Committee's First Report of Session 2008–09*] was *agreed to* and was published as the First Special Report of the Liaison Committee, Session 2008–09, HC 805.

5. Sub-committees

(a) Liaison Sub-Committee

Ordered, That Dr Phyllis Starkey be appointed as a member of the Liaison Sub-Committee

(b) National Policy Statements Sub-Committee

Ordered, That a National Policy Statements Sub-Committee be appointed (Standing Order No.145(6)).

Ordered, That Mr Alan Williams and Peter Luff be members of the National Policy Statements Sub-Committee in addition to those members of the committee who are for the time being members of the Communities and Local Government, Energy and Climate

Change, Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, Transport and Welsh Affairs committees, and that Mr Alan Williams be Chairman of the National Policy Statements Sub-Committee (Standing Order No. 145 (7)(a)(ii)).

6. Strengthening the Committee system

The Committee considered this matter.

7. Tabling of amendments by select committees

The Committee considered this matter.

8. Overseas travel

The Committee considered this matter. [*In accordance with the Committee's decision, funding for overseas travel approved by the Chairman is given in the Annex to these minutes.*]

9. Committee room bookings

The Committee considered this matter.

[Adjourned till Thursday 16 July 2009 at 9.45am]

Annex

In accordance with the Committee's decision of 31 January 2008, the Chairman approved the following overseas visits:

Business and Enterprise Committee to Paris, Toulouse and Milan, for its inquiry into exporting out of recession; work on the automotive industry and the aerospace sector, at a cost not exceeding £31,731;

Energy and Climate Change Committee to California, for its inquiry into low carbon technologies in a green economy, at a cost not exceeding £84,066;

European Scrutiny Committee to Spain, for its discussions with the Spanish Government before it takes over the European Presidency, at a cost not exceeding £31,283;

Health Committee to Berlin, Brussels and France, for its inquiry into alcohol abuse, at a cost not exceeding £26,408;

Home Affairs Committee to Portugal and Spain, for its inquiry into the cocaine trade, at a cost not exceeding £19,712;

International Development Committee to Bangladesh and Nepal, for its inquiries into DFID's programmes in Bangladesh and Nepal, at a cost not exceeding £60,394;

Justice Committee to Crown Dependencies (Isle of Man, Channel Islands), for its inquiry into the Government's management of its relationship with the Crown Dependencies, at a cost not exceeding 13,702;

Scottish Affairs Committee to Ireland and Iceland, for its inquiry into the banking crisis in Scotland, at a cost not exceeding £32,579; and

Treasury Committee to Frankfurt, Vienna and Budapest, for its inquiry into the banking crisis, at a cost not exceeding £41,189.

Thursday 16 July 2009

Members present:

Mr Alan Williams, in the Chair

Mr James Arbuthnot	Andrew Miller
Sir Alan Beith	Mr Terry Rooney
Malcolm Bruce	Mr Mohammad Sarwar
Sir Patrick Cormack	Mr Barry Sheerman
Mr Andrew Dismore	Dr Phyllis Starkey
Mrs Louise Ellman	Keith Vaz
Mike Gapes	Mr Phil Willis
Mr Edward Leigh	Sir George Young
John McFall	

1. Oral evidence with the Prime Minister

Oral evidence was heard from Rt Hon. Gordon Brown MP, the Prime Minister.

[Adjourned till Thursday 29 October 2009 at 9.30am

Thursday 29 October 2009

Members present:

Mr Alan Williams, in the Chair

Sir Alan Beith	John McFall
Michael Connarty	Andrew Miller
Mr Andrew Dismore	Mr Mohammad Sarwar
Mrs Louise Ellman	Mr Barry Sheerman
Mr Michael Jack	Dr Phyllis Starkey
Mr Edward Leigh	

1. Westminster Hall debates

The Committee considered this matter.

2. Financial Scrutiny: the Alignment Project and Estimate days

Ordered, The Chairman write to the Committee on the Reform of the House of Commons with a proposal on the use of Estimate Days.

The draft Report [*Financial Scrutiny: Parliamentary Control over Government Budgets: Government Response to the Committee's Second Report of Session 2008–09*] was agreed to and was published as the Second Special Report of the Liaison Committee, Session 2008–09, HC 1074.

3. Pre-appointment hearings

The Committee considered this matter.

4. Publication of Select Committee Reports: List on the Order Paper

Ordered, That the Chairman write to the Speaker to recommend that all special reports by select committees be listed on the Order Paper in the same fashion as substantive Reports.

5. National Policy Statements Sub-Committee

The Committee considered this matter.

6. Evidence to Select Committees and the Freedom of Information Act

Ordered, That the Chairman write to the Leader of the House about the instructions given to officials on providing information to select committees.

[Adjourned till Tuesday 10 November 2009 at 12.30pm

Tuesday 10 November 2009

Members present:

Mr Alan Williams, in the Chair

Mrs Louise Ellman
Dr Hywel Francis

Mr Michael Jack
Dr Phyllis Starkey

National Policy Statements

The Committee met to consider a report from the National Policy Statements Sub-Committee, pursuant to Standing Order No. 145(10).

The Chairman reported from the National Policy Statements Sub-Committee the following resolutions (10 November):

That the Sub-Committee recommends that, pursuant to Standing Order No.152H, the Transport Committee be designated to consider the proposal for a National Policy Statement on ports, which was laid before the House on 9 November.

That the Sub-Committee recommends that, pursuant to Standing Order No.152H, the Energy and Climate Change Committee be designated to consider the proposals for National Policy Statements on (a) energy; (b) fossil fuel electricity generating infrastructure; (c) renewable energy infrastructure; (d) gas supply infrastructure and gas and oil pipelines; (e) electricity networks infrastructure; and (f) nuclear power generation; which were laid before the House on 9 November.

Resolved, That the Committee agrees with the recommendations of the National Policy Statements Sub-Committee reported to it this day.

Ordered, That the Chairman do make the following report to the House:

That, pursuant to Standing Order No. 152H:

(1) the Committee had designated the Transport Committee to consider the Proposal under the Planning Act 2008 for a national policy statement for ports, laid before the House on 9 November; and

(2) the Committee had designated the Energy and Climate Change Committee to consider the Proposals under the Planning Act 2008 for national policy statements for (a) energy, (b) fossil fuel electricity generating infrastructure, (c) renewable energy infrastructure, (d) gas supply infrastructure and gas and oil pipelines, (e) electricity networks infrastructure and (f) nuclear power generation; laid before the House on 9 November.

[Adjourned till Thursday 10 December 2009 at 9.30am

Proceedings of the Sub-Committee

Monday 26 January 2009

Members present:

Mr Alan Williams, in the Chair

Mr Michael Jack
John McFall

Dr Tony Wright
Sir George Young

1. Oral evidence from the Prime Minister

The Sub-Committee *discussed* themes for the forthcoming evidence session with the Prime Minister.

[Adjourned till Tuesday 23 June 2009 at 5.30pm .

Tuesday 23 June 2009

Members present:

Mr Alan Williams, in the Chair

Mr Michael Jack
Barry Sheerman

Sir George Young

2. Oral evidence from the Prime Minister

The Sub-Committee *discussed* themes for the forthcoming evidence session with the Prime Minister.

[Adjourned to a place and time to be fixed by the Chairman.

Proceedings of the National Policy Statements Sub-Committee

Tuesday 10 November 2009

Members present:

Mr Alan Williams, in the Chair

Mrs Louise Ellman
Dr Hywel Francis

Mr Michael Jack
Dr Phyllis Starkey

National Policy Statements

The Sub-Committee considered this matter.

Resolved, That the Sub-Committee recommends that, pursuant to Standing Order No.152H, the Transport Committee be designated to consider the Proposal for a national policy statement for ports, which was laid before the House on 9 November.

Resolved, That the Sub-Committee recommends that, pursuant to Standing Order No.152H, the Energy and Climate Change Committee be designated to consider the Proposals for national policy statements for (a) energy; (b) fossil fuel electricity generating infrastructure; (c) renewable energy infrastructure; (d) gas supply infrastructure and gas and oil pipelines; (e) electricity networks infrastructure; and (f) nuclear power generation; which were laid before the House on 9 November.

Ordered, That the Chairman do report these resolutions to the main Committee forthwith.

[Adjourned to a place and time to be fixed by the Chairman.]