

From: Nick Harvey MP, Spokesman for the Commission

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House of Commons

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1. In response to your Report published on 10 October 2005, the House of Commons Commission agreed on 17 October that I should give you a written reply in due course. As you will remember, I mentioned this at the outset of the debate on 3 November in Westminster Hall, and again at the end, and offered to send copies of the reply to those who attended the debate.
2. The recent Report of the House of Lords Science and Technology Committee on Energy Efficiency published in July 2005 included a section dealing with the parliamentary estate (paras 7.44-7.52). The Committee commended the authorities of both Houses for their achievements in controlling energy use within the Estate, and went on to make a number of recommendations for improved practice on data collection, monitoring and reporting, and for the appointment of a full-time Energy Manager. The Committee concluded that—

“Parliament should seek to set an example for the wider public sector”.
3. Your report has therefore come as a further welcome stimulus to ongoing consideration of what can be done corporately to minimise the environmental impact of the estate.
4. Attached is a paper addressing your report and many of the 56 specific recommendations. There are some which you may wish to pursue with the Administration Committee. Others have been noted and are being examined at a technical level.
5. Running through the Report and the recommendations is a desire for more open budgeting, targeting and reporting. The Clerks of both Houses will shortly be signing off the latest strategy on Energy and Water Saving and

6. Waste Management which the Administration Committee looked at in October. As I said in the Westminster Hall debate on 3 November, and as referred to at para 4 of the response enclosed, I am keen to progress the idea of an annual report on environmental performance.
7. In the conclusions of the report, you quite correctly note the part that can be played by individual behavioural choices. A programme of energy and water usage awareness and training is being planned for the forthcoming year. The first event, a talk by David Bellamy, took place on 21 November, attended by over 60 staff of the House and others. I hope you will give this programme your active support.
8. But the importance of individual behaviour of course in no way diminishes the responsibility of the corporate body to keep the House's environmental impact to a minimum, consonant with it being able to fulfil its primary role. I look forward to a continuing dialogue on this in the years ahead.

Nick Harvey MP