



House of Commons
Liaison Committee

A New Publication Order for Select Committee Evidence

Second Report of Session 2005–06

Report, together with formal minutes

*Ordered by The House of Commons
to be printed 15 June 2006*

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*)
Constitutional Affairs – Mr Alan Beith MP (*Liberal Democrat, Berwick-upon-Tweed*)
Culture, Media and Sport – Mr John Whittingdale MP (*Conservative, Maldon and Chelmsford East*)
Defence – Mr James Arbuthnot MP (*Conservative, North East Hampshire*)
Education and Skills – Mr Barry Sheerman MP (*Labour/Co-op, Huddersfield*)
Environmental Audit – Mr Tim Yeo MP (*Conservative, South Suffolk*)
Environment, Food and Rural Affairs – Mr Michael Jack MP (*Conservative, Fylde*)
European Scrutiny – Mr Jimmy Hood MP (*Labour, Lanark and Hamilton East*)
Finance and Services – Sir Stuart Bell MP (*Labour, Middlesbrough*)
Foreign Affairs – Mike Gapes MP (*Labour/Co-op, Ilford South*)
Health – Mr Kevin Barron MP (*Labour, Rother Valley*)
Home Affairs – Mr John Denham MP (*Labour, Southampton Itchen*)
Human Rights (Joint Committee) – Mr Andrew Dismore MP (*Labour, Hendon*)
International Development – Malcolm Bruce MP (*Liberal Democrat, Gordon*)
Northern Ireland Affairs – Sir Patrick Cormack MP (*Conservative, South Staffordshire*)
Office of the Deputy Prime Minister: Housing, Planning, Local Government and the Regions – Dr Phyllis Starkey MP (*Labour, Milton Keynes South West*)
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 – Sir George Young MP (*Conservative, North West Hampshire*)
Statutory Instruments – David Maclean MP (*Conservative, Penrith and The Border*)
Trade and Industry – Peter Luff MP (*Conservative, Mid Worcestershire*)
Transport – Mrs Gwyneth Dunwoody MP (*Labour, Crewe and Nantwich*)
Treasury – Mr 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.

Publication

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 Helen Irwin (Clerk), Robert Wilson (Second Clerk), Fiona Channon (Committee Assistant) and Catherine Close (Secretary).

Contacts

All correspondence should be addressed to the Clerk of the Liaison Committee, House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA. The telephone number for general enquiries is 020 7219 5675; the Committee's email address is liaisoncommittee@parliament.uk

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A New Publication Order for Select Committee Evidence

1. The practice of Select Committees with regard to written evidence is to publish it as soon as practicable, unless considerations of confidentiality apply. Where witnesses are giving oral evidence their supporting memoranda are usually made available to the press and public at the relevant meeting. But sometimes a Committee will wish to publish all the written evidence it has received on a subject in a single volume at the start of the relevant inquiry. This has traditionally required the Committee staff to obtain a printing Order (in the form of an entry in the Votes and Proceedings) authorising the printing of the evidence, thereby acquiring the protection against possible legal action provided by the Parliamentary Papers Act 1840. The Act protects papers published under the authority of the House. Hitherto that authority has been represented in Vote entries by an Order to print. However, such an order carries with it a requirement to produce and publish a printed version of the paper. This requirement is insisted on for papers presented to Parliament by outside bodies which are given printing Orders (eg reports from agencies, or the NAO). It is also expected of select committees.

2. The development of the internet has provided Committees with an additional, immediate vehicle for publishing evidence, of which they are increasingly making use. Although most of the evidence placed on the Committee's website is subsequently printed (and will continue to be so), it is not appropriate or cost-effective to do this in all cases.

3. We therefore propose that a new form of Vote entry should be introduced, which will ensure, according to legal advice we have received, that the publication of memoranda on a committee's website attracts the protection of absolute privilege under the 1840 Act. Later in the inquiry, a decision would be taken on whether to publish the relevant memoranda again in printed form.

4. The new form of Vote entry would be as follows:

Defence,—Memoranda laid before the Defence Committee [Strategic Nuclear Deterrent]; to be published [Mr James Arbuthnot].

5. The new procedure is intended to be applied only to *written* evidence received by committees. It will not be used for either oral evidence or reports. Memoranda directly referred to in the report will continue to be printed. It will still remain possible for paper versions of all other written evidence to be made available on request.

6. We recommend that the House should be invited, at an early date, to approve the proposed new publication order and that the Leader of the House should table the necessary Motion.

Formal minutes

Thursday 15 June 2006

Members present:

Mr Alan Williams, in the Chair

Mr James Arbuthnot	Mr John McFall
Mr Alan Beith	Rosemary McKenna
Malcolm Bruce	Andrew Miller
Mr John Denham	Mr Mohammad Sarwar
Mr Andrew Dismore	Mr Barry Sheerman
Mr Frank Doran	Dr Phyllis Starkey
Mrs Gwyneth Dunwoody	Mr Phil Willis
Mike Gapes	Mr Tim Yeo
Mr Michael Jack	Sir George Young
Peter Luff	

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The Committee considered this matter.

Draft Report (A New Publication Order for Select Committee Evidence), proposed by the Chairman, brought up and read.

Ordered, That the Chairman's draft Report be read a second time, paragraph by paragraph.

Paragraphs 1 to 6 read and agreed to.

Resolved, That the Report be the Second Report of the Committee to the House.

Ordered, That the Chairman do make the Report to the House.

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[Adjourned till Tuesday 4 July at 8.45am]

Reports from the Liaison Committee since 1996

The following reports have been produced by the Committee since Session 1996–1997.

Session 2005–06

First Report	Government Reply to the Annual Report for 2004	HC 855
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Session 2004–05

First Report	Annual Report for 2004	HC 419
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Session 2003–04

First Report	Annual Report for 2003	HC 446
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Session 2002–03

First Report	Annual Report for 2002	HC 558
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Session 2001–02

First Special Report	Evidence from the Prime Minister	HC 984
First Report	The Work of Select Committees 2001	HC 590
Second Report	Select Committees: Modernisation Proposals	HC 692

Session 2000–01

First Report	Shifting the Balance: Unfinished Business	HC 321
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Session 1999–2000

First Report	Shifting the Balance: Select Committees and the Executive	HC 300
Second Report	Independence or Control?	HC 748
Third Report	Resource Accounting and Budgeting	HC 841

Session 1996–97

First Report	The Work of Select Committees	HC 323
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