

**THE
HOUSE OF COMMONS
COMMISSION**

**Parliamentary Commissioner for
Standards: Nomination of Candidate**

Report presented to the House of Commons by Mr Speaker

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Commissioners

The Speaker (The Rt Hon Michael Martin) (Chairman) *ex officio*, The Leader of the House of Commons (The Rt Hon Harriet Harman) *ex officio*, The Rt Hon Mrs Theresa May, nominated by the Leader of the Opposition, Sir Stuart Bell, Mr Nick Harvey and The Rt Hon David Maclean, nominated by the House.

Secretary of the Commission: Andrew Kennon.

Assistant Secretary: Jenny McCullough.

HOUSE OF COMMONS COMMISSION

Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards: Nomination of Candidate

Introduction

1. On 19 July 1995, the House debated the First Report of the Select Committee on Standards in Public Life,¹ and passed the following Resolution:

“That the appointment of a Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards be set in hand under arrangements to be made by Madam Speaker on the advice of the House of Commons Commission and in accordance with the recommendations of the Select Committee on Standards in Public Life.”

2. The principal duties and functions of the Commissioner are:

- Maintaining and monitoring the operation of the Register of Members’ Interests and the other Registers.
- Providing advice on a confidential basis to individual Members and to the Select Committee on Standards and Privileges, including advice about the registration of interests, the interpretation of the Code of Conduct and questions of propriety.
- Preparing guidance and providing induction courses for new Members on matters of conduct, propriety and ethics.
- Monitoring the operation of the Code of Conduct and, where appropriate, proposing possible modifications of it to the Committee.
- Receiving and investigating specific complaints about the conduct of Members and reporting findings to the Committee where appropriate
- Submitting to the House annually a report on the exercise by him of his functions.

3. Sir Philip Mawer, the current Commissioner, was nominated by the Commission and approved by the House on 13 February 2002, as the third holder of the post, for an initial period of three years. On 26 June 2003 the House resolved,

¹HC (1994–95) 637.

That this House agrees with the proposals of the House of Commons Commission in paragraphs 8 to 10 of its response to the Eighth Report from the Committee on Standards in Public Life (HC 422), that—

- (a) any future appointment to the office of Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards shall be for a period of five years, and shall not be renewable; and**
- (b) notwithstanding the Resolution of the House of 13th February 2002, the appointment of the current Commissioner shall expire on 25th June 2008, and shall not be renewable.**

4. On 28 June 2007 Sir Philip informed the Speaker of his wish to step down from the appointment on 31 December 2007 by when he would have served for almost six years.

5. The House of Commons Commission would like to record its appreciation of Sir Philip Mawer's dedication to the House during his time as Commissioner. Sir Philip has brought qualities of integrity and impartiality to his role while conducting a series of complex and difficult inquiries with professionalism and fairness. He has also been proactive in seeking to improve understanding and appreciation of the requirements placed on Members and others by the House, with the aim of reducing the risks of these being breached. In these ways he has made a significant contribution to the development of the House's system of self-regulation first established following the recommendation of the Nolan Report.

The competition

6. The selection process followed that of 2002. Following advertisement in the national press and a search by recruitment consultants, a total of 46 candidates was reduced through sifts and interviews to a short list for interview. Five candidates were interviewed by a Board consisting of the Clerk Assistant, Mr Douglas Millar CB, (Chairman), the Rt Hon Sir George Young, Bt, MP, Ms Sheila Drew Smith (independent member) and the Director of Finance and Administration, Mr Andrew Walker.

7. The Interview Board recommended two candidates for final interview by the Commission. For those interviews, Commissioners were joined by the Chairman of the Committee on Standards and Privileges, the Rt Hon Sir George Young MP.

The nominated candidate

8. Following the exacting process set out above, the House of Commons Commission recommends to the House Mr John Lyon CB, currently the Director General of Legal and Judicial Services in the Ministry of Justice responsible for relations between the judiciary and executive. The Commission is confident that he has the necessary standing, ability and personal authority for the role, and that he will bring to it the independence, discretion, and strength of character required to ensure that the system of Parliamentary self-regulation continues to work effectively, and that it is seen to do so both inside and outside the House.

9. Mr Lyon's *curriculum vitae* is set out in the Annex.

10. If the House approves the nomination, the appointment will be for a single term of five years. Mr Lyon has indicated that he would be able to take up the appointment in January 2008.

Resources

11. Upon appointment, the Parliamentary Commissioner will be supported directly by the Registrar of Members Interests and four staff, two of whom are part-time. Legal and other assistance has been engaged in the past and will be provided when required. The Commission attaches great importance to ensuring that the Commissioner has the necessary resources.

12. The new Commissioner will wish to form a view on the time commitment necessary for him fully to discharge his duties. If his nomination is approved by the House, Mr Lyon will take up the appointment initially on the basis of a four-day week at a salary of £108,000 pa; it is of course likely that the workload will vary from time to time, and the Commission will impose no restriction on the days per week which the Parliamentary Commissioner considers necessary.

ANNEX

JOHN LYON CB

February 2003 to date — A Director General, Ministry of Justice, responsible for the management of relations between the judiciary and executive.

January 1999 to February 2003 — Director General, Home Office, dealing with the Public Service Agreements to reduce crime.

1994–1998 — Director, Home Office, responsible for Criminal Justice and Sentencing Policy.

1991–1994 — Director, Northern Ireland Office, Belfast

1990–1991 — Grade 5, Secretary to Lord Justice Woolf’s Inquiry into Prison Disturbances

1987–1990 — Grade 5, Home Office Security Service Liaison

1985–1987 — Grade 5, Home Office Nationality Division

1982–1985 — Grade 5, Northern Ireland Office: Principal Private Secretary to Secretary of State

1980–1982 — Grade 7, Prison Service: women and young offenders

1978–1980 — Grade 7, Cabinet Office: Legislative Programme

1969–1978 — Home Office

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