

HOUSE OF COMMONS COMMISSION ACT 2015

EXPLANATORY NOTES

BACKGROUND

3. The House of Commons Commission is responsible for the administration and services of the House of Commons. The House of Commons (Administration) Act 1978 (the '1978 Act') provides the statutory basis for the Commission.
4. On 10 September 2014, the House of Commons agreed to establish the House of Commons Governance Committee. This followed a pause in the process for recruiting a new Clerk of the House of Commons. The Committee's remit was focused on consideration of the question of how the responsibilities of the Clerk and Chief Executive of the House should be allocated in future. The remit also included matters relating to the governance of the House more generally, including the role of the House of Commons Commission.
5. The Committee published its report, 'House of Commons Governance', on 17 December 2014. This report recommended that the House of Commons Commission should have a new explicit statutory responsibility: to set strategic priorities and objectives for the services provided by the House Departments. It also argued that the Commission's parliamentary membership should be expanded, in order to better represent the breadth of views in the House and to make it less likely that a future Government might have a majority on the Commission. It maintained that, with the addition of two external and two official members, an expanded Commission would also enable it to have a closer relationship with the other committees of the House with responsibilities for its administration, as well as the new Executive Committee that it proposed to replace the existing Management Board of House officials.
6. These recommendations are taken forward through this Act.