

HOUSE OF LORDS APPOINTMENTS COMMISSION

MINUTES OF THE 26TH MEETING HELD ON 9TH JUNE 2004

Present: Lord Stevenson (Chairman)
Baroness Dean
Lord Dholakia
Mrs Felicity Huston
Lord Hurd
Mrs Angela Sarkis

Mr Jim Barron - Secretary
Ms Geraldine Alexander - Secretariat
Mr Ekpe Attah – Secretariat
Miss Jo Tobie - Secretariat

Apologies

1. Apologies were received from Dame Deirdre Hine.

Minutes of the twenty-fifth meeting of the Commission

2. The minutes of the meeting held on 18th March 2004 were agreed.

Chairman's update

3. The announcement of the new peerages on 1 May had attracted relatively little media attention. The Chairman had received positive feedback about the Commission's recommendations from existing members of the Lords.
4. The Commission was updated on efforts to secure adequate support for [REDACTED]. The Secretariat would let the Commission know when the nature of this support had been confirmed.

Consideration of holdovers

5. It was agreed that the Commission Members would pass comments on the circulated list to the Secretariat. The Chairman would then circulate a revised list, reflecting these comments.
6. Members would let the Secretariat know if they were aware of any significant changes to holdovers' circumstances, so these could be taken into account when considering their nominations.
7. The Commission hoped that this process would reduce the number of nominations retained from previous rounds by around 50%.

Vetting policy

8. The Commission noted the proposals in the paper for the enhancement of its vetting policy.
9. It was noted that the Electoral Commission had strict requirements regarding what parties were obliged to disclose in relation to donations. The Commission would be able to make use of information held by the EC. However, the Commission should not necessarily be tied to the EC's requirements for disclosure if it was felt the Commission needed further information for its vetting process.
10. It was agreed that the Commission should seek assurances from Party Leaders – rather than the Chief Whips - that nominations were not related to donations, as it was the Party Leaders themselves who were invited to make nominations. It was agreed that the Chairman would write to the Party Leaders offering to meet with them to discuss the Commission's proposals to enhance its vetting. A memorandum setting out the proposals would accompany the letter.

Running a continuous process

11. The Commission agreed to the suggestions set out in the paper on a continuous assessment process. In future – subject to Number 10's agreement - it anticipated making a small number of recommendations on a regular basis.

Financial Report for 2003/2004

12. The Commission noted the report and thanked the Secretariat for it.

Any other business

13. Sir Hayden Phillips had contacted the Chairman to discuss whether the Commission would consider taking on the functions of the PHSC. Gay Catto, the Secretary to the PHSC, had also visited Jim Barron to discuss the same issue. The Commission would be happy to consider this proposal further.

Commission Secretariat
June 2004