

HOUSE OF LORDS COMMISSION

Access to the Parliamentary Estate for the Earl Marshal and Lord Great Chamberlain

Memorandum by the Secretary

Background

1. On 5 September 2024 the Government introduced the House of Lords (Hereditary Peers) Bill in the House of Commons. This had its First Reading in the House of Lords on 13 November, and second reading will take place on 11 December.
2. The main purpose of the Bill is to remove the right of hereditary peers to sit and vote in the House of Lords. This includes the hereditary peers holding the offices of the Earl Marshal and Lord Great Chamberlain, who assist in the planning of state occasions and perform ceremonial duties. Assuming the Bill receives Royal Assent, the Earl Marshal and Lord Great Chamberlain will no longer be members of the House of Lords but will continue to need to access the Parliamentary estate to exercise their ceremonial functions which do not require them to be members of the house. In order to facilitate this access a Parliamentary pass will be required.

Proposal from the Leader

3. The Leader of the House of Lords has written to the Lord Speaker proposing access rights for the Earl Marshal and Lord Great Chamberlain in order that they can continue their functions (Annex A). This is a decision for the Commission, as the House governance body responsible for access rights.

Decision for the Commission

4. **The Commission is invited to:**
 - **agree in principle that access rights to the Parliamentary estate should be granted for the Earl Marshal and Lord Great Chamberlain.**

Alasdair Love
Secretary to the House of Lords Commission
December 2024

Annex A – Letter from Rt Hon Baroness Smith of Basildon, Leader of the House of Lords, to Rt Hon Lord McFall of Alcluith, Lord Speaker (5 November 2024)



The Lord Speaker
House of Lords
SW1A 0PW

Dear John

5 November 2024

Access to the Parliamentary Estate for the Earl Marshall
and Lord Great Chamberlain

We met recently, where I outlined to you, as Chair of the Commission, the Government proposal in relation to the holders of the offices of Lord Great Chamberlain and Earl Marshall, following the assumed successful passage of the House of Lords (Hereditary Peers) Bill.

I thought it would be helpful to follow that up in writing, in order that you can circulate to colleagues on the House of Lords Commission, from whom I am now seeking an agreement in principle regarding next steps.

As you know, the Government is not proposing an exemption in the bill for either postholder in relation to their membership of the House or their right to sit or vote - assuming Royal Assent - but both will require access to the Palace of Westminster to undertake their ongoing ceremonial duties. In practice this means that each will need a Parliamentary pass to access the Estate.

It is on this basis that I am now asking Commission colleagues to agree that access right for holders of those offices in principle. I have discussed this with my colleagues in the Usual Channels and all agree that both the Lord Great Chamberlain and the Earl Marshall should have the right to access the Parliamentary Estate. As the House governance body with responsibility for access rights, I would be grateful if you could include this request for an agreement in principle on the agenda of the next Commission meeting on 18th December, or if easier to circulate for agreement via email.

There will clearly be practical details to work through about what this means regarding access to the wider facilities of the House, which my office will liaise with Black Rod and the House Authorities on. I will revert to the Commission with further details.

Yours ever,