House of Commons

Procedure Committee

e-Petitions: Call for Government Action: Government Response to the Committee's Second Report of Session 2008–09

First Special Report of Session 2008–09

Ordered by The House of Commons to be printed 15 July 2009

HC 952
Published on 20 July 2009
by authority of the House of Commons
London: The Stationery Office Limited
£0.00

Procedure Committee

The Procedure Committee is appointed by the House of Commons to consider the practice and procedure of the House in the conduct of public business, and to make recommendations.

Current Membership

Rt Hon Greg Knight MP (*Conservative, Yorkshire East*) (Chairman, from 9.11.05)
Ms Celia Barlow MP (*Labour, Hove*)
Mr Christopher Chope MP (*Conservative, Christchurch*)
Ms Katy Clark MP (*Labour, North Ayrshire and Arran*)
Mr Mark Field MP (*Conservative, Cities of London and Westminster*)
Mr Roger Gale MP (*Conservative, North Thanet*)
Andrew Gwynne MP (*Labour, Denton and Reddish*)
John Hemming MP (*Liberal Democrat, Birmingham, Yardley*)
Mr Eric Illsley MP (*Labour, Barnsley Central*)
Mrs Siân C. James MP (*Labour, Swansea East*)
Mrs Linda Riordan MP (*Labour, Halifax*)
Sir Robert Smith MP (*Liberal Democrat, West Aberdeenshire and Kincardine*)
Sir Peter Soulsby MP (*Labour, Leicester South*)

The following Members were also members of the Committee during the Parliament:
Mr David Anderson MP (*Labour, Blaydon*)
Mr Jim Cunningham MP (*Labour, Coventry South*)
Annette Brooke MP (*Liberal Democrat, Mid Dorset and Poole North*)
Mr David Gauke MP (*Conservative, South West Hertfordshire*)
Rosemary McKenna MP (*Labour, Cumbernauld, Kilsyth and Kirkintilloch East*)
Sir Nicholas Winterton MP (*Conservative, Macclesfield*) (Chairman till 9.11.05)
Mr Rob Wilson MP (*Conservative, Reading East*)

Powers

The powers of the Committee are set out in House of Commons Standing Orders, principally in SO No 147. 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 http://www.parliament.uk/proccom.

Committee staff

The current staff of the Committee are Dr Lynn Gardner and Miss Sara Howe (Clerks) and Rowena Macdonald (Committee Assistant).

Contacts

All correspondence should be addressed to the Clerk of the Procedure Committee, Journal Office, House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA . The telephone number for general enquiries is 020 7219 3318; the Committee's email address is proccom@parliament.uk

First Special Report

On 8 May we published a Report on *e-Petitions: Call for Government action* as our Second Report of Session 2008–09, HC 493. We have now received a response from the Government, which is set out below.

Government response

I am grateful to the Procedure Committee for giving further consideration to the issue of e-Petitions in its second report of the 2008/09 session entitled *e-Petitions: Call for Government Action* (HC 493). The Government shares the Committee's enthusiasm for a new e-Petitioning system and agrees that it has the potential to enhance public engagement with Parliament.

As my predecessor has said, our only concern about the system proposed by the Committee is the projected cost of more than £4 million over a Parliament. Notwithstanding the necessary complexity of the Committee's proposed scheme, this system seems to cost more in comparison with other similar IT projects, including the Downing Street petitions website.

As the Prime Minister said in his statement to the House on 10 June, the Government intends to establish a new Committee on parliamentary reform, chaired by Dr Tony Wright. The Committee would consider the question of how members of the public might be able to initiate debates and proceedings in the House. I hope that the new Committee will be able to draw on the Procedure Committee's findings in considering the role that a simpler, cheaper form of on-line communication might take, whether in the form of an e-Petitions system or something slightly different.

Barbara Keeley MP
Deputy Leader of the House

Reports from the Procedure Committee since 2005

The following reports have been published during this Parliament:

Session 2008–09

First Report	Interleaving of Bills and Explanatory Notes	HC 377
Second Report	e-Petitions: Call for Government action	HC 493
Third Report	Written Parliamentary Questions	HC 859
First Special Report	e-Petitions: Call for Government Action: Government Response to the Committee's Second Report of Session 2008–09	HC 952

Session 2007–08

First Report	e-Petitions	HC 136

Session 2006–07

First Report	Public Petitions and Early Day Motions	HC 513
Second Report	Corrections to the Official Report	HC 541

Session 2005–06

First Report	Legislative and Regulatory Reform Bill	HC 894
Second Report	Application of the *sub judice* rule to proceedings in coroners' courts	HC 714