



The Leader of the House of Lords

2 February 2009

**POLICE ACCESS: PAPER BY THE CLERK OF THE PARLIAMENTS
AND DRAFT PROTOCOL**

At my request, the Clerk of the Parliaments has prepared a paper setting out the current position in respect of police access to the precincts of the House of Lords for the purpose of searching a Member's office.

I have today placed the Clerk of the Parliaments' paper in the Library of the House and copies are available in the Printed Paper Office. I believe that this report is a full and useful analysis of the current position, which I hope will provide clarity to Members.

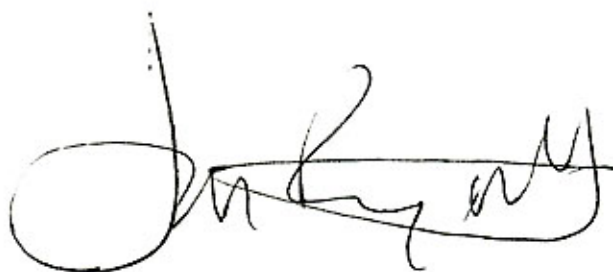
Annexed to the paper is a draft protocol for the House of Lords on the execution of a police search in the precincts of the House, which is in similar terms to an interim protocol which the Speaker of the House of Commons has issued for comment in the Commons.

Two issues are raised in the Clerk of Parliaments' paper on which I wish to express a view.

- The first issue, which is raised in paragraph 32 of the paper, is whether a warrant should always be required for a search of a Member's office, or whether a warrant should not be required in the event that a Member whose office was to be searched gave written permission. I believe that a warrant should always be required. It should be noted that the Speaker's interim protocol in the Commons states that a warrant must always be obtained.
- The second issue is the question of whom Black Rod must consult before responding to a police request to conduct a search. I propose that Black Rod should consult the Lord Speaker and the Leader of the House, as the draft protocol suggests.

I would welcome any views which Members may have on the draft protocol set out in annex B to the paper by the end of February. I will consider any views expressed with the Lord Speaker, the other Leaders and the Convenor of the Crossbench peers. Thereafter, the draft protocol would be referred to the Committee for Privileges and the House Committee for approval. Those Committees would in turn report to the House.

Until a final protocol has been agreed, interim arrangements will operate as laid out in the draft protocol. A warrant would be required in any case where police requested access; and Black Rod will only allow police access after consultation with the Lord Speaker and myself.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J. Royall', written in a cursive style.

BARONESS ROYALL OF BLAISDON