

Guidance for people interested in newly deposited private bills

This note is designed to assist individuals interested in the new private bills deposited in November 2024.

The following bills have been deposited:

- [City of London \(Markets\) Bill](#)
- [General Cemetery Bill](#)
- [Malvern Hills Bill](#)
- [Norwich Livestock Market Bill](#)

For more information about private bills, please see the guidance available on the [Parliament website](#).

The Private Bill Office in the House of Commons can be contacted on prbohoc@parliament.uk or 020 7219 3250, and the Private Bill Office in the House of Lords can be contacted on hlprivatebills@parliament.uk or 020 7219 8261.

Introduction to private bills

A private bill is a piece of draft legislation which is for the interest or benefit of a particular person, group or organisation. Unlike public bills, which apply generally and affect everyone, private bills only affect a particular section of the population.

Private bills are introduced by external bodies, such as organisations or local authorities, rather than by the Government or individual Members of Parliament. The party presenting a private bill to Parliament is known as the bill's 'promoter'.

Private bills go through a number of stages during their progression through Parliament (outlined below). A bill will become law once it has been passed by both Houses of Parliament.

The private bill process

What has happened so far

On 27 November 2024, the promoters of prospective private bills presented petitions for their new bills (a formal request for the proposed legislation) to the Private Bill Office in the House of Commons, and also deposited a copy of the proposed bill in the Private Bill Office of the House of Lords.

Copies of the proposed bills are available in hard copy from the Private Bill Office or the Vote

Office in the House of Commons or the Private Bill Office in the House of Lords, or electronically on the bills' pages on the Parliament website. The bill pages can be accessed by following the links at the top of this document or by searching by a bill's title on the following link: bills.parliament.uk

What will happen next

Examination

On 18 December, the petitions for new bills will be 'examined' by the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills. At this examination, the Examiners will consider whether the promoters of the proposed bills have complied with all relevant Standing Orders.

The Private Business Standing Orders of the [House of Commons](#) and the [House of Lords](#), which govern private bill procedure, outline a number of steps which the promoters of a private bill must take before a bill can be presented to Parliament. These include publishing notices about the proposed bill in certain newspapers, making copies of the bill (and other documents, if necessary) available in certain places, and giving notice to certain parties who may be affected by the works proposed by the bill.

If the promoters have complied with the relevant Standing Orders, the bill may be presented to Parliament. If the promoters are found to be non-compliant with any of the applicable Standing Orders, the Examiners will report this to the Standing Orders Committees of both Houses. The Standing Orders Committees will decide whether the relevant Standing Orders should be dispensed with – thereby enabling the bill to proceed – or whether the bill should not be allowed to make any more progress.

Meetings of the Examiners and the Standing Orders Committees are held in public and can be attended or watched (live or via recording) on parliamentlive.tv. Written transcripts of proceedings will subsequently be published.

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If a bill is compliant with the relevant Standing Orders, or if the Standing Orders Committees dispense with the necessary Standing Orders to allow the bill to proceed, the bill will then be presented to Parliament. The bill will be presented to the House in which it is to begin on 21 January (unless consideration by the Standing Orders Committees takes it beyond this date), and it will receive its First Reading the following day. First Reading is a purely formal stage, during which nothing happens in the Chamber of the relevant House.

Decisions as to which House a bill is to start in will be made after examination. Bills will be split between the House of Commons and the House of Lords, but all bills will in due course be considered by both Houses.

Future stages

After a bill receives its First Reading, there will be a petitioning period during which individuals and organisations who oppose the bill, or who believe that they will be affected by its provisions, can petition against it. For more on petitioning, see below.

For bills starting in the House of Commons which receive their First Reading on 22 January, the petitioning period will end on 30 January. Where a bill's First Reading takes place after 22 January (due to the necessity of consideration by the Standing Orders Committees), the petitioning period will usually last for ten calendar days after the bill's First Reading. For bills starting in the House of Lords, the petitioning period will end on 6 February, or ten days after the bill's First Reading (where examination or consideration by the Standing Orders Committee means that First Reading could not take place on 22 January).

The Second Reading of a bill starting in the House of Commons will take place between four and eight days after its First Reading; the Second Reading of a bill starting in the House of Lords will take place no earlier than two sitting days after its First Reading.

If a bill receives a Second Reading, it will be committed to either an opposed bill committee (if petitions have been received against the bill) or an unopposed bill committee (if no petitions have been received, or if no petitioners have grounds to appear before the committee). These committees will hear from the promoters of the bill (and, in the case of opposed bill committees, petitioners against the bill), and decide whether the case for the bill has been adequately proven or whether any amendments should be made to the bill.

After a bill is reported from committee it will have a report stage in the House of Commons (but not in the House of Lords) before its Third Reading. If it receives a Third Reading, the bill will then be introduced into the other House and go through the same stages in that House (including a second petitioning period). A bill will be presented for Royal Assent once it has been passed by both Houses.

Petitioning against private bills

Individuals, groups or organisations which oppose a private bill are able to submit petitions against the bill during one (or both) of the petitioning periods.

A petition against a private bill is a document submitted by a party who believes they would be negatively affected by the provisions outlined in the bill and therefore opposes the bill's introduction as it is currently drafted. A petition can object to the whole of a bill or only to certain parts of it. Petitions cannot be submitted in favour of a bill (although parties in favour of a bill in its original or current form can submit a 'petition against alteration' in response to any changes which are proposed to be made to the bill at committee stage – please contact the Private Bill Offices for further advice).

While anybody can submit a petition against a private bill, only petitioners who are "directly and specially affected" by a bill have the right to have their petitions considered by the committee considering the bill. Being "directly and specially affected" means that the bill impacts upon the property or other interests of the petitioner in a way which is specific to that petitioner and different to the effect on people and bodies generally. If the promoter of a bill believes that a petitioner is not "directly and specially affected" by the bill, it can object to the petition being considered. In such a case, a separate hearing may be arranged to determine whether the petitioner should be heard.

Petitioners who do have the right to be heard on their petition will have the opportunity to appear before the committee considering the bill to make their case (either in person or

through a representative). Petitioners can ask for the bill to be rejected, for amendments to be made to the bill, or for certain undertakings or concessions to be made by the bill's promoter to address the petitioner's concerns.

Further guidance on how to draft a petition, including the template form to be used, will be published before the opening of the petitioning periods. However, interested parties should note that:

- petitions against a private bill should explain who the petitioners are, describe how the petitioners' property or other interests are directly and specially affected by the provisions of the bill, and state what the petitioners wish to be done to reduce the adverse effects they believe the bill would have on their property or interests;
- petitions can be submitted via an online portal on the Parliament website or by email or post to the relevant Private Bill Office;
- petitions will be sent to the bill's promoter and published on the Parliament website (with the petitioners' addresses removed);
- a fee of £20 per petition (not per petitioner) is payable upon the submission of a petition.

Further information

If you have any questions about private bill procedure, please feel free to get in contact with the Private Bill Offices on the details listed at the start of this document. If you have questions about a specific bill, and its provisions or potential impacts, these questions will be better directed to the promoters of the bill, either directly or via their agent (which will be listed on the bill's page on the Parliament website).

More detailed information on private bill practice and procedure can be found on the [Parliament website](#) or in [Erskine May](#).

If you are interested in looking at previous private bills or petitions against private bills, you can search using [this page](#) on the Parliament website, filtering by 'Session' and 'Bill type'. Recent bills which have attracted petitions include the Bishop's Stortford Cemetery Bill (2022-23), the City of London (Markets) Bill (2022-23), the Royal Albert Hall Bill (2022-23) and the Highgate Cemetery Bill (2019-21).