



House of Lords
House of Commons
Joint Committee on the
Palace of Westminster

Restoration and Renewal of the Palace of Westminster

First Report of Session 2016–17



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*Report, together with formal minutes relating
to the report*

*Ordered by the House of Lords
to be printed on 5 September 2016
Ordered by the House of Commons
to be printed on 5 September 2016*

**HL Paper 41
HC 659**

Published on 8 September 2016
by authority of the House of Lords and House of Commons

Joint Committee on the Palace of Westminster

The Joint Committee on the Palace of Westminster was appointed in July 2015 to consider the restoration and renewal of the Palace of Westminster.

The House of Commons Members were appointed on 16 July 2015. The House of Lords Members were appointed on 20 July 2015 and reappointed on 25 May 2016.

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Powers

The Committee had the power to send for persons, papers and records; to sit notwithstanding any adjournment of the House; to report from time to time; to appoint specialist advisers; and to adjourn from place to place.

Publication

All publications of the Committee are published on the Committee's website at www.parliament.uk/jcpow.

Evidence relating to this report is published on the [inquiry publications page](#) of the Committee's website.

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Summary

Introduction

The Palace of Westminster, a masterpiece of Victorian and medieval architecture and engineering, faces an impending crisis which we cannot responsibly ignore. It is impossible to say when this will happen, but there is a substantial and growing risk of either a single, catastrophic event, such as a major fire, or a succession of incremental failures in essential systems which would lead to Parliament no longer being able to occupy the Palace.

The issue is not structural: although extensive erosion and water damage to the stonework are visible throughout the Palace, there is no significant risk of foundations failing, or of walls or roofs collapsing. The main problem lies in the building's mechanical and electrical (M&E) services: the vast network of pipes, cables and machinery that carry heat, ventilation, air-conditioning, power, water, data, and dozens of other essential services around the building. Many of these systems were last replaced in the late 1940s and reached the end of their projected life in the 1970s and 1980s. The patch-and-mend approach which has seen the building through the decades since then is no longer sustainable. Intervention on a much larger scale is now required. Unless an intensive programme of major remedial work is undertaken soon, it is likely that the building will become uninhabitable.

Our role has been to examine the need for a programme of works and to recommend how it should proceed. Having reviewed all the evidence currently available, and taken new evidence from experts, we are convinced of the need for the works. We have also concluded that, in principle, a full decant of the Palace of Westminster is the best delivery option. However, there is significantly more work to be done by professionals before budgets can be set, buildings are vacated and works can commence. We therefore recommend that both Houses give their approval for the immediate next step required for the Programme to proceed to the next stage, which is the establishment of an arm's-length Delivery Authority, overseen by a Sponsor Board. After validating our conclusions and testing the feasibility of our recommendations, the Delivery Authority will produce the detailed designs and business case, before both Houses are invited to make a final decision on the Programme.

The Palace of Westminster

Most of today's Palace of Westminster was built after the fire of 1834 as a monument to the unwritten British constitution, incorporating the Commons, the Lords and the ceremonial functions of the Monarch in a single building. It stands on the site where Parliament has sat almost continuously since the Middle Ages and incorporates the medieval buildings that survived the fire, including the 13th century undercroft chapel of St Stephen's and the early 16th century cloisters. The oldest part of the Palace, the Great Hall, or Westminster Hall, was built by William II (William Rufus) at the end of the 11th Century, with a hammer beam roof installed by Richard II at the end of the 14th Century. Westminster Hall has hosted the royal courts of law; the deposition of Richard II; the state trials of (among others) Sir William Wallace, Sir Thomas More,

the second Earl of Essex, Guy Fawkes, the Earl of Strafford, Charles I, the Jacobite rebels and Warren Hastings; the coronation banquets of monarchs from Richard the Lionheart in 1189 to George IV in 1821; the lying-in-state of notable figures including many monarchs, William Gladstone, Sir Winston Churchill, and the victims of the R101 airship crash; and addresses to both Houses of Parliament by Her Majesty the Queen and dignitaries including, in recent years, Nelson Mandela, Aung San Suu Kyi and Pope Benedict XVI.

The Victorian building, with its magnificent neo-Gothic riverside frontage, its two impressive towers (the Elizabeth Tower containing ‘Big Ben’ and the Victoria Tower containing the Parliamentary Archives) and its clever incorporation of the medieval buildings, is one of the most famous and most frequently photographed and filmed buildings in the world. Its international significance has been recognised in its status as a UNESCO World Heritage site (one of 30 in the UK and its overseas territories). In addition to housing Parliament during the Boer and Crimean Wars, the two World Wars and the conflicts in Suez, Korea, the Falklands, the Gulf and Iraq, it has witnessed enormous political change, including reform of safety and working conditions in Victorian factories and mines, the extension of voting rights to working men and to women, the abolition of ‘back-to-back’ housing, the creation of the modern police service and the NHS, the introduction of the secret ballot and free compulsory education for all children. It has become a part of the fabric of our democracy.

The Palace of Westminster does not belong to MPs and Peers, it belongs to the people of the United Kingdom. Those who have the privilege of serving in the Lords and Commons are merely its custodians. As such it is a vital part of our national heritage and it is important that this historic building is preserved, maintained and adapted for the needs of today and tomorrow for the nation as a whole.

What needs to be done

Although the building is formally designated as a Royal Palace, those who work in it will be all too familiar with stories of flooding, power failures, fire hazards, freezing-cold rooms in the winter and boiling-hot offices in the summer. These problems are due to the age of the building’s M&E services, most of which are hidden away, either in the basements underneath the Palace, or behind walls, under floor voids, within ceilings and in vertical shafts known as risers.

Much of the M&E plant dates from the mid-20th Century; some of it dates from the Victorian era. Many of the systems reached the projected end of their lifecycles in the 1970s and 1980s. They have been patched up year after year, often with new cables and pipes laid on top of old, and with little knowledge of what the existing services are, where they go, or whether they are still live. So far the services have, for the most part, continued to work. But there is universal agreement among all the experts whom Parliament has consulted that the risk of a major failure is now unacceptably high, and it is growing. Repairing and replacing the M&E services is further complicated by the significant amount of asbestos present throughout the Palace. Asbestos is believed to be in almost every vertical riser, as well as in many plant rooms, corridors and under-floor voids. This adds greatly to the complexity, cost and timetable of much of the necessary work.

Complete and sudden failure of the M&E services—the kind that would require the Palace to be abandoned immediately—is a real possibility. This could be a single, catastrophic failure, such as the complete loss of electrical power to one of the Chambers, a devastating fire, extensive flooding, or a gas leak requiring a total evacuation. We could also see a series of smaller, incremental failures which, over a period of months or years, would seriously impede, or even put a stop to, normal Parliamentary work.

Complete replacement of the Palace's M&E systems, which is now very pressing, is therefore the main driver for the Restoration and Renewal (R&R) Programme, but there are four other streams of work which will need to be carried out alongside the M&E refurbishment: dealing with the huge amount of asbestos present throughout the building, installing proper fire compartmentation and other fire safety measures, improving accessibility by bringing the building into conformity with modern standards of disabled access, and conserving the historic fabric of the building.

It is important to stress that this work to the Palace of Westminster would have to be done, whether or not it continued to be used by Parliament. Some might argue that Parliament should move to a new building, and that the Palace of Westminster should be turned into a museum, but the essential works described above would need to be carried out anyway, unless the nation wished to tolerate the eventual loss of this iconic building. We suggest that by addressing all these works as a single programme, we will be able to rationalise and document the building services to make future maintenance easier and more cost-effective, meaning that we will never again have to undertake a programme of this size.

The challenges of the Programme

The Palace of Westminster is unique in its size, its position, its engineering and its security. The replacement of the M&E services alone will account for approximately 74% of the cost of the essential works.¹ The other 26% (approximately) of the cost of the essential works is likely to be required for heritage conservation and other work required to meet a minimum acceptable outcome (for example, work to ensure that the Palace complies with legislation relating to public buildings). The historic nature of the Palace and the high quality of its fabric complicates any renovation work and requires careful planning and consultation with heritage stakeholders. The large volume of asbestos present throughout the building adds significantly to the cost and time required, especially as much of the contaminated space is very difficult to access. Moreover, the security requirements of the site also add considerably to the complexity and cost of the Programme.

The challenges presented by the Restoration and Renewal Programme are large, and we have taken our responsibilities as a Committee very seriously. In order to guide our work, at the beginning of our inquiry we agreed a number of key criteria, which we set out in our Call for Evidence. These were:

¹ Information provided by the Restoration and Renewal Programme Team. This figure includes the cost of replacing the M&E services, as well as the cost of associated work to access those services and to reinstate and make good any affected building structure or fabric. The percentage is based on the capital costs (construction only) of scenario E1A in the Independent Options Appraisal, based on a P50 confidence level (explained in Chapter 3) and applying the same assumptions as the Independent Options Appraisal.

- to preserve the heritage of the Palace of Westminster as the home of the UK Parliament for future generations;
- to deliver value for money for the taxpayer;
- to continue the effective functioning of Parliament whilst work is happening; and
- to consider the options in the light of the current security climate.

Our recommendations will, we believe, meet these key criteria.

Delivery option

The central question is how to deliver this major programme of work: as a rolling programme (Option 1), trying to sustain the work of Parliament in the middle of a building site for several decades; in two phases (Option 2), by renovating first one House, then the other; or in a single phase (Option 3), by vacating the building completely for a few years and tackling the whole site at once.

All of the very extensive evidence we have heard shows that Option 1 carries a particularly high burden of risk, and a possibility that the disruption caused to the work of Parliament by the building programme could become intolerable before the Programme was completed (which, under this Option, would probably be in the 2050s or 2060s).

Option 2, decanting the two Houses one at a time, could turn out to combine the worst of all options. This is because it would be necessary, first of all, to construct a new network of M&E plant above ground to deliver services to the occupied half of the building, before stripping out the old systems. It would involve a lot of the disruption and inconvenience of Option 1, with each House, in turn, having to operate around a busy and noisy building site in the other half of the building. The practical difficulties, as well as the security and health and safety challenges, of even one House operating on the same site as a heavy works zone for several years can scarcely be overstated. In addition to this, Parliament would still have to acquire and fit-out temporary accommodation for one House first, and then adapt it again for the other House afterwards. This would not just include the Chamber for each House, but also everything else in the part of the Palace occupied by that House, including offices for Members and staff, the library, procedural offices and other facilities. This option therefore carries high risks to the business of Parliament and is likely to be impractical.

On the basis of the evidence we have received, but subject to further validation work to be completed by the new Delivery Authority, it is clear that Option 3—complete decant of the Palace (though not the rest of the Parliamentary Estate) for the duration of the works—is the best option. It would allow the works to be completed in the shortest possible timeframe, it would minimise the risk of disruption to the day-to-day operation of Parliament, it would be likely to involve the lowest overall capital cost, it would minimise the risk to the Programme itself, and it provides the greatest scope for meeting the needs of a 21st Century Parliament.

Whilst full decant has numerous advantages over the other delivery options, the Delivery Authority will need to conduct further work in order to test and validate our preferred options for temporary accommodation. However, we are confident that full decant is achievable and that appropriate alternative accommodation can be found.

Temporary accommodation

All of the options for temporary accommodation will require further work in order to establish their feasibility for use by either House, especially in terms of their cost, design and security. However, we have assessed the options at a high level and reached some preliminary conclusions on the best locations for each House.

Subject to further feasibility work, we suggest that the House of Commons could acquire Richmond House, opposite the Cenotaph on Whitehall, currently home to the Department of Health. The House of Commons is already in discussions with the Government regarding the possibility of acquiring Richmond House as part of the Commons long term property consolidation strategy, and in order to enable the Northern Estate Programme. If Richmond House were to be acquired, a temporary Chamber could be established in its inner courtyard and the rest of the House of Commons' core operations could be consolidated in and around Portcullis House and the Northern Estate (which includes Norman Shaw North, Norman Shaw South, Derby Gate, Canon Row and 1 Parliament Street).

For the House of Lords, also subject to further feasibility work, the Queen Elizabeth II Conference Centre, opposite Westminster Abbey, could be used to accommodate a Chamber and its associated core functions, committee rooms, and some offices for Members. Other Members could remain in their current offices in the House's other buildings, or relocate to offices nearer the temporary Chamber, or a combination of both these options.

Some adaptations to the new spaces will inevitably be necessary on the part of both Houses, but we are confident that they will not interfere unduly with the work of Parliament and its Members.

Scope

The challenge of the Restoration and Renewal Programme is immense, but it also offers scope to deliver some significant improvements to the way the Palace works, turning a masterpiece of 19th Century architecture and design into a building that is fit for a 21st Century Parliament. Any additional improvements will need to be subject to a rigorous value-for-money assessment, but there are a number of ways in which the building can be made more suitable for the demands placed upon it by the public, staff and Members. Furthermore, there is an opportunity to deliver significant benefits for visitors, to improve the way in which members of the public can engage with the work of Parliament, and vastly to improve the way in which people with a disability can access and use the building. It would be an error for Parliament to miss this rare opportunity to deliver a more open, efficient, inclusive and outward-facing Parliamentary building.

We therefore recommend that, subject to rigorous value-for-money assessments being conducted by the Delivery Authority, alongside the essential works, both Houses should agree in principle to include in the scope of the Restoration and Renewal Programme some additional, defined improvements to the building. Our role did not involve the development of detailed designs for the Programme, which will be for the Delivery Authority and Sponsor Board to draw up. However, we do recommend some Objectives and Guiding Principles for the scope of the Programme, which we hope will assist the Sponsor Board and Delivery Authority in determining the overall scope of the Programme.

Governance

Parliament has neither the capability nor the capacity to deliver a Programme of this scale and complexity. A clearly defined governance structure will therefore need to be put in place in order to ensure that the works are carried out effectively, to time and to budget, and that they meet the necessary objectives set by both Houses. Such a governance structure will also need to be clearly accountable to Parliament, as well as responsive to the requirements of the public, Members and staff of both Houses.

We have therefore recommended a two-tier governance model, similar to that which has been proven to work well on major projects such as the London 2012 Olympics and Crossrail. In order to ensure that the interests of Parliament continue to be properly represented, a suitably empowered Sponsor Board should be established, with representation from both Houses, as well as from Government and wider society. A separate, arm's-length Delivery Authority with the necessary technical expertise to oversee the Programme should also be established. This Delivery Authority will need to validate the preferred options recommended in this report and produce a thorough business case before the works can proceed. Once the final design, budget and schedule have been approved by Parliament in due course, the Delivery Authority will then be responsible for carrying out the work. Such a delivery model will require primary legislation and we hope that both Houses will be able to pass this legislation swiftly.

Conclusion

We have concluded that there is a clear and pressing need to tackle the work required to the Palace of Westminster and to do so in a comprehensive and strategic manner to prevent catastrophic failure in the next decade. We have also concluded that, in principle, a full decant of the Palace of Westminster presents the best option under which to deliver this work. In our view, conducting the works in a single phase, involving a full decant, would allow the works to be completed in the shortest possible timeframe, it would minimise the risk of disruption to the day-to-day operation of Parliament, it is likely to involve the lowest capital cost, it would minimise the risk to safety of construction operatives and occupants, it would minimise the risk to the Programme itself, and it would provide the greatest scope for meeting the needs of a 21st Century Parliament building.

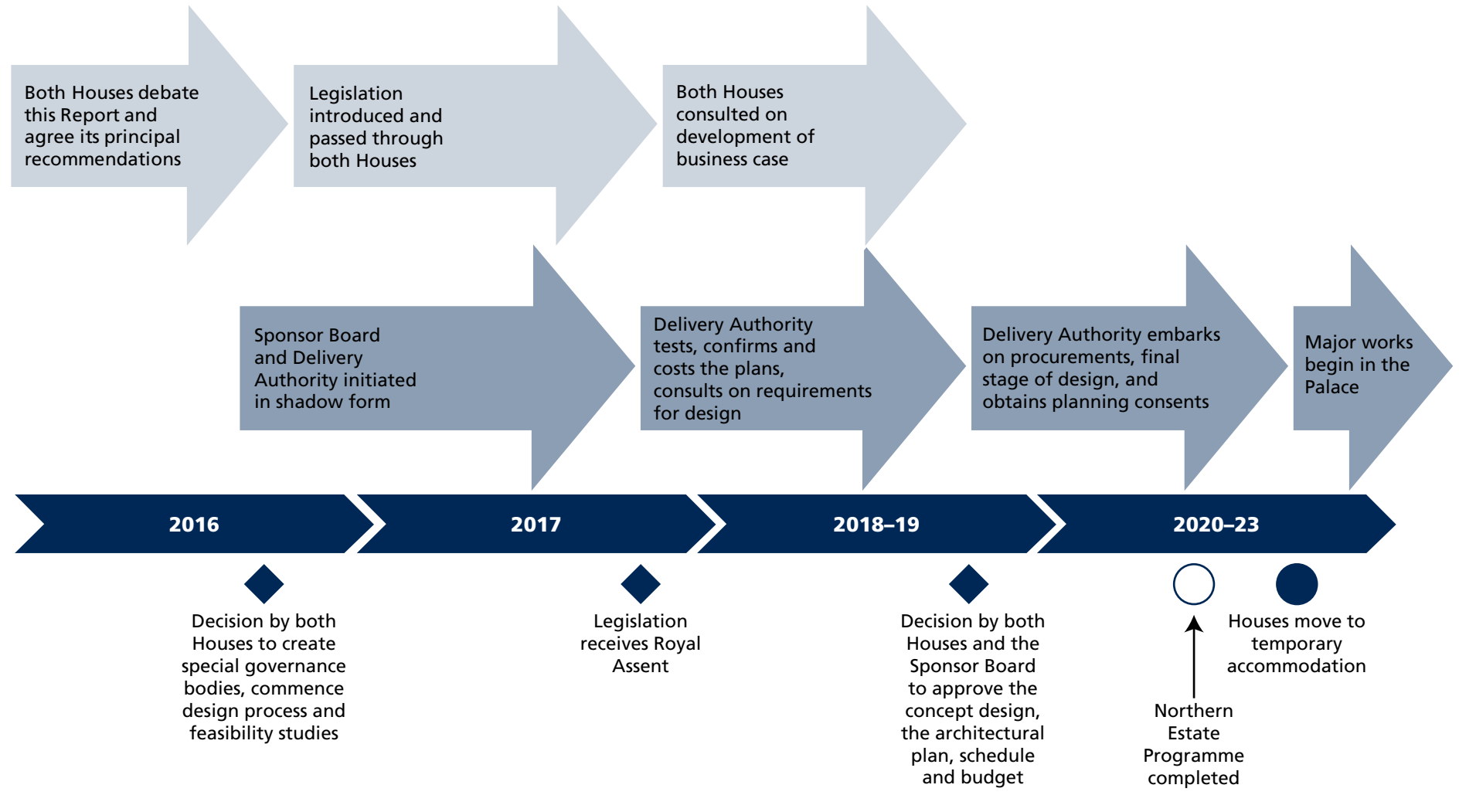
However, our inquiry is just one stage in the progress of the Restoration and Renewal Programme, and it is now for the Delivery Authority to test our conclusions and to

validate that a full decant is feasible, achievable and cost-effective. In order to ensure that the Programme is taken forward speedily, we recommend that an arm's-length Delivery Authority should be established as soon as possible, which will be responsible for taking the Programme into its next phase. A Sponsor Board will also need to be established to oversee the work of the Delivery Authority and to ensure that its plans meet the requirements of both Houses of Parliament. Ultimately, the Delivery Authority will have to produce a detailed concept design, budget and schedule, which the Sponsor Board and both Houses of Parliament will need to approve before works commence. These steps are outlined in Figure 1.

Parliament now needs to face up to the challenge and take the right decisions in order to safeguard the Palace of Westminster for the future. The financial cost of the R&R Programme will be high, and Members of both Houses will have to make sacrifices and tolerate a degree of inconvenience. However, the benefits should be great: a newly-refurbished Palace of Westminster which contains all the services needed by a modern, accessible, accountable Parliament, with better access for the public who wish to visit the building and engage with the work of both Houses, but which also preserves the best of its magnificent Victorian design and medieval heritage. The consequences of continuing to neglect the fundamental problems with the building are unthinkable.

It is vital that the Restoration and Renewal Programme should not be delayed at this critical juncture. If the works are to be commenced in the early 2020s then it is essential that Parliament should proceed with the next steps quickly. We believe that both Houses must act now to restore and renew this historic building for the future, and to ensure that the Palace of Westminster is preserved for future generations.

Figure 1: Next steps for the Restoration and Renewal Programme



1 Introduction

The Palace of Westminster

1. The Palace of Westminster is one of the most recognisable buildings in the world. Built in the middle of the 19th Century on the site where Parliament has met since the medieval period, and next to the ancient Westminster Hall, the current Palace has been home to the two Houses of Parliament for over 150 years and the building itself has come to be regarded by many as a symbol of British democracy. At the time of its conception the building's design and construction celebrated the best of Victorian technology and innovation, despite its archaic gothic appearance, and it is still one of the most cherished and celebrated buildings in the United Kingdom. Over time, however, the services and technology which were once new and innovative have become dilapidated, outdated, and in increasingly pressing need of repair and replacement.

2. As custodians of the building, the governing bodies of the two Houses of Parliament have regarded the restoration and renewal of the Palace of Westminster as an increasingly pressing issue in recent years. The Restoration and Renewal (R&R) Programme was established by the two Houses in January 2013, following a series of reports and studies into the condition of the Palace of Westminster. During the final years of the last Parliament an independent appraisal of the options was commissioned and carried out. This Committee was established in July 2015 in order to consider the information gathered so far and to make recommendations to both Houses on how to proceed with the Programme.

3. The restoration of such a magnificent historic building will be an extremely complex and difficult task. The building welcomes approximately one million visitors every year, ranging from people who wish to see Parliament in action, to schoolchildren taking part in educational activities, and tourists who wish to see the historic architecture and artwork. The building has to accommodate numerous different functions, from the formal proceedings of two Houses of Parliament, to state occasions, meetings with constituents, charity events and many others. Even during recesses, the possibility of a recall at short notice means that it is necessary to ensure that both Chambers can be brought back into action at a couple of days' notice. Ensuring that the business of Parliament can continue with minimal disruption during the period of the works, and that members of the public can continue to access the work of Parliament, will therefore be a huge logistical challenge.

4. However, the renovation of the Palace of Westminster also offers the potential for significant opportunities. Members and staff of both Houses are extremely privileged to be able to work within such a unique and special building. With that privilege comes a duty to ensure that the building is maintained and repaired in the best way possible, in order to preserve and protect the building for the nation as a whole.

A brief history of the building

5. The site in and around the current Palace of Westminster has been a location for ecclesiastical buildings, royalty and power since at least the Middle Ages. Soon after he came to the Throne in 1042, Edward the Confessor began building the original Palace of Westminster as a place from which he could oversee the construction of Westminster Abbey next door. After the Norman Conquest of 1066, William the Conqueror inherited

the palace and, during his reign, London became an increasingly important trading port and business centre, though the seat of government was not yet based at Westminster. In 1097, William's son, William II (William Rufus), began laying the foundations of the Great Hall (now called Westminster Hall).²

6. During the 12th and 13th Centuries, an increasing number of institutions began to settle at Westminster. From as early as 1259, the state openings of parliamentary occasions were held in the King's private apartment at Westminster, though it is not clear where Parliament met under Simon de Montfort in 1265. After 1512, when Henry VIII abandoned the Palace in favour of the nearby Palace of Whitehall following a fire, the Palace of Westminster became the permanent home of Parliament.³

7. In 1834, a devastating fire destroyed most of the collection of buildings now referred to as the 'old Palace of Westminster'. The medieval Westminster Hall, a building of tremendous national significance, was saved, as were parts of St Stephen's Chapel, including the undercroft chapel, and fragments of St Stephen's Cloister. However, most of the rest of the parliamentary buildings on the site, many of which were then of quite recent construction, were lost.⁴

8. Following the fire, a competition was launched to design a new parliamentary building. The winner, Charles Barry, was appointed as architect in 1836 and oversaw the construction of the building until his death in 1860, when he was succeeded by his son, Edward Middleton Barry. Charles Barry was supported by his co-creator of the Palace of Westminster, Augustus Welby Pugin, who is viewed by many as a genius of the revived Gothic Perpendicular style, used throughout the building. Preparation of the site began in 1837, the foundation stone was laid in 1840 and the House of Lords and House of Commons began to sit in their new Chambers in 1847 and 1852 respectively. The rest of the building was largely finished by 1870, though Barry's original design was never fully realised.⁵

9. Since then, the building has continued to evolve and various adaptations have been made. One of the most significant developments has been the reconstruction work carried out after the Second World War. The House of Commons Chamber was completely destroyed in 1941 and the House of Lords Chamber also suffered damage during the war.⁶ Following forceful arguments by the Prime Minister at the time, Sir Winston Churchill, the House of Commons Chamber was rebuilt on the previous site, with very similar dimensions and layout to Barry's Chamber. The damaged archway leading into the Chamber was preserved as a reminder of the destruction which had taken place.⁷ Other major developments have included the construction of a new office block for the House of Commons in Star Chamber Court in 1967, new office accommodation created

2 Information taken from the [Living Heritage](#) pages of the Parliamentary website [accessed 26 July 2016]

3 With the exception of four meetings in Oxford during the 17th Century. Information taken from the [Living Heritage](#) pages of the Parliamentary website [accessed 26 July 2016] and the [Bodleian Library website](#) [accessed 26 July 2016]

4 [Restoration and Renewal of the Palace of Westminster: Pre-Feasibility Study and Preliminary Strategic Business Case](#), October 2012, p 9. Further information about the development of the Parliamentary Estate can be found on the [History of the Parliamentary Estate](#) pages of the Parliamentary website.

5 [Restoration and Renewal of the Palace of Westminster: Pre-Feasibility Study and Preliminary Strategic Business Case](#), October 2012, p 9

6 *Ibid.*, p 10

7 *Ibid.*, p 11

in House of Lords' courtyards in 1974 and the opening of a new visitor reception building on Cromwell Green in 2008.⁸

10. In 1970, the Palace of Westminster was formally listed as a Grade I building (denoting exceptional interest).⁹ Together with Westminster Abbey and St Margaret's Church it forms parts of a UNESCO World Heritage Site. According to UNESCO's listing:

“The Palace is one of the most significant monuments of neo-Gothic architecture, as an outstanding, coherent and complete example of neo-Gothic style. Westminster Hall is a key monument of the Perpendicular style and its admirable oak roof is one of the greatest achievements of medieval construction in wood. Westminster is a place in which great historical events have taken place that shaped the English and British nations.”¹⁰

11. From 1870 to 1992, the Government Office of Works and its successor organisations were responsible for the upkeep and maintenance of the Palace of Westminster. In the light of the Government's decision to privatise the Property Services Agency (which by then had acquired responsibility for the Palace),¹¹ and following a review¹² in 1990 by Sir Robin Ibbs, the Government's former Efficiency Adviser, in 1992 responsibility for maintaining the Palace of Westminster, and the corresponding budget, were transferred from Government to Parliament itself.¹³ However, the Palace of Westminster remains a Royal Palace, and the Lord Great Chamberlain retains control over certain areas of the building.¹⁴

Background to the Restoration and Renewal Programme

12. Despite its grand external appearance, inside the Palace of Westminster there is a concerning tale of decay, disrepair and dilapidation. While the building's essential services (such as heating, cooling, water, sewage, electricity, cabling) have been kept functioning, this is done with increasing difficulty and growing risks. There has been no overall renovation of the building since the partial rebuilding in 1945–50 and some of the services are even older. The original basements and vertical shafts have become so crammed with pipes, cables, and other services that further work in these areas has become increasingly difficult and expensive. Asbestos is hidden throughout the Palace, acting as an ever-present threat which complicates and prolongs any remedial works. Furthermore, the lack of effective fire compartmentation means that the risk of a major conflagration spreading throughout the building is always there.¹⁵

8 *Ibid.*, p 12

9 *Ibid.*, p 13

10 UNESCO website: <http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/426> [accessed 26 July 2016]

11 Property Services Agency and Crown Suppliers Act 1990 (c. 12)

12 House of Commons Commission, *House of Commons Services: Report to the House of Commons Commission by a team led by Sir Robin Ibbs*, 27 November 1990 (Session 1990–91, HC 38)

13 [Restoration and Renewal of the Palace of Westminster: Pre-Feasibility Study and Preliminary Strategic Business Case](#), October 2012, pp 14–15

14 *Erskine May*, 24th Edition (2011), p 10

15 [Restoration and Renewal of the Palace of Westminster: Pre-Feasibility Study and Preliminary Strategic Business Case](#), October 2012, p 5

13. In 2012, a Pre-Feasibility Study on the condition of the Palace (see paragraph 16 below) reported the following:

“Considering the age of the Palace of Westminster, the 60+ years that have passed since the partial post-war refurbishment, the long-term under-investment in the fabric and the intensive use to which the Palace is put, it is remarkable that it continues to function. The signs of wear and tear, the number and frequency of relatively minor floods and mechanical breakdowns, the high cost of maintaining obsolescent equipment and the large sums that are now having to be spent on aggressive maintenance and risk reduction all provide tangible evidence of the looming crisis. A growing body of surveys, consultancy reports and risk registers point to the further deterioration that will occur and the severe hazards that could occur if fundamental renovation is delayed indefinitely.

It is hard to imagine how the Palace will survive for future generations to use and admire without a major mid-life overhaul.”¹⁶

The 2012 Study also concluded that:

“If the Palace were not a listed building of the highest heritage value, its owners would probably be advised to demolish and rebuild.”¹⁷

14. There are multiple reasons for the general neglect of the building in the second half of the 20th Century, which we explore in more detail in Chapter 2. In short, a desire to confine major work to recess periods in order to avoid significant disruption to the work of Parliament, an increased focus on the acquisition of additional buildings to provide more office accommodation, and a lack of institutional knowledge about the state of the services, all contributed to the general decline of the Palace and the increasingly chaotic way in which new services were installed on top of old.

15. Following decades of underinvestment and successive failed attempts to address the backlog of work¹⁸, in January 2012 the Management Boards of the House of Commons and House of Lords agreed to appoint a Study Group to:

- review previous documentation relating to the modernisation of the building services of the Palace of Westminster; and
- describe the preliminary strategic business case for a general modernisation of the Palace.¹⁹

16 *Ibid.*, p 27. The 2012 Report drew on a wide range of documentation about the state of the Palace produced over the preceding 12 years. Those documents included an initial survey in 2000, a rationalisation review in 2002–03, a report on the respective merits of the primary heat transport media (2003), the work of the Palace Basement Engineering Project Board (2004–05), subsequent detailed consultancy work between 2005 and 2008, a review and further “due diligence” work on previous reports produced in 2008, further plans for a major Programme of M&E works in 2008 and 2009, a decant feasibility study from 2009, a detailed observation report on the state of the plant at highest risk of failure (also 2009), and two Office of Government Commerce gateway reviews in 2010 and 2011.

17 *Ibid.*, p 5

18 *Ibid.*, pp 14–16

19 *Ibid.*, p 3

16. In October 2012, that group produced its report, *Restoration and Renewal of the Palace of Westminster: Pre-Feasibility Study and Preliminary Strategic Business Case*²⁰, which outlined the significant extent of the works required, and the risks associated with not tackling the work in a coherent and timely manner. The House of Commons Commission and the House of Lords House Committee considered that report in October 2012 and agreed that an appraisal of all the options that retained the Palace of Westminster as the permanent home of the Houses of Parliament should be conducted.²¹

17. At that point, the idea of building a permanent, new parliamentary building elsewhere was ruled out. The House of Commons Commission announced that:

“[...] the Commission has ruled out the option of constructing a brand new building away from Westminster and no further analysis will be undertaken on this option.”²²

Similarly, in the House of Lords, the House Committee announced that it had “ruled out the idea of a new permanent parliamentary building elsewhere.”²³

18. In December 2013, a consortium led by Deloitte Real Estate, including AECOM and HOK, was appointed to produce an independent appraisal of the options for the Restoration and Renewal of the Palace of Westminster. Their Independent Options Appraisal (IOA)²⁴ was published on 18 June 2015.

19. The Independent Options Appraisal considered in detail three possible delivery options:²⁵

- Option 1 (described as “Enabled Option 1” in the IOA) is a defined rolling programme of substantial repairs and replacement over a period of several decades, working around the continued occupation of the Palace by Parliament, though with longer Parliamentary recesses. The IOA estimated that this option could take between 25 and 40 years, with 32 years being the most likely.²⁶ The building would be divided into 12 construction zones (plus the basement) which would be tackled one at a time, with the occupants moved to alternative accommodation, including temporary structures in the courtyards and other open spaces. This would include both Chambers, which would have to be vacated separately for between two and four years each. The Option is described as “enabled” because, as originally defined, it could not meet the Programme objectives, so some constraints (for example, relating to the degree of noise and nuisance which Parliament could tolerate) had to be removed or reduced in order to produce a viable option.
- Option 2 involves conducting the work in two phases, with first one House, then the other, being moved to an off-site location. One half of the building would remain in

20 *Ibid.*

21 House of Commons Commission [Statement](#), 29 October 2012 and Written Statement by the Chairman of Committees (Lord Sewel), on behalf of the House Committee, HL Deb, 30 October 2012, [cols WS57–58](#)

22 House of Commons Commission [Statement](#), 29 October 2012

23 Written Statement by the Chairman of Committees (Lord Sewel), on behalf of the House Committee, HL Deb, 30 October 2012, [cols WS57–58](#)

24 Deloitte LLP, [Palace of Westminster Restoration and Renewal Programme Independent Options Appraisal](#), September 2014

25 Deloitte LLP, [Palace of Westminster Restoration and Renewal Programme Independent Options Appraisal](#), September 2014, Volume 1, pp 7–15

26 Based on P10–P90 confidence levels (i.e. with a 10% to 90% probability).

operation while the other half became a building site. The IOA estimated that this Option could take between nine and 14 years, with 11 years being the most likely.²⁷

- Option 3 is full decant, with both Houses moving out of the Palace of Westminster (but not the rest of the Parliamentary Estate) for the duration of the works. For this Option, the IOA estimated a possible duration of between five and eight years, with six years being the most likely.²⁸
20. These options were mapped against three outcome levels, A, B and C:
- Outcome Level A represents the ‘do minimum’ option of like-for-like replacement of existing systems, which would secure the long-term future of the building, safeguard its status as a World Heritage Site and ensure compliance with the relevant legislation.
 - Outcome Level B would provide scope to make some improvements to the building, such as the upgrading of offices on the upper floor, the provision of comfort cooling in more areas, or the pedestrianisation of the courtyards.
 - Outcome Level C would provide for more ambitious improvements, such as glazing over courtyards to create additional indoor space, or establishing a visitors’ centre.²⁹

Combining the three delivery options and three outcome levels produced nine possible scenarios, shown in Table 1.

Table 1: IOA scenarios shortlist

	Option 1 Rolling decant	Option 2 Partial decant	Option 3 Full decant
Outcome Level A	E1A	2A	3A
Outcome Level B	1B	2B	3B
Outcome Level C	1C	2C	3C

Source: Deloitte LLP, [Palace of Westminster Restoration and Renewal Programme Independent Options Appraisal](#), September 2014, Volume 1, p 5

21. Only the shaded options were costed as part of the IOA exercise. In fact, the original Delivery Option 1 was ruled out as not viable during the initial shortlisting process, but reinstated in a modified (“enabled”) version to meet the requirement of the House of Commons Commission and the House of Lords House Committee that an option involving a rolling programme of works be included in the appraisal.

22. While the scenarios analysed in the IOA have provided a useful starting point for our consideration of how to approach the Programme, we have not taken the conclusions of that report for granted. We have spent a lot of time challenging and scrutinising the conclusions contained within the IOA, and have also remained open to other suggestions about how the work should be tackled.

27 Based on P10–P90 confidence levels.

28 Based on P10–P90 confidence levels.

29 Deloitte LLP, [Palace of Westminster Restoration and Renewal Programme Independent Options Appraisal](#), September 2014, Volume 1, pp 5–6

The Committee's work

23. The Joint Committee was appointed by both Houses in July 2015 in order to consider the best way to proceed with the Restoration and Renewal Programme.³⁰ In many ways, this has been a committee like no other. While we were established to consider the building in which we work, we have been acutely conscious of the fact that we are considering an issue of significant national interest. At our first meeting in September 2015, we agreed that it would be important to work in a collegiate, collaborative manner, and to set aside party political affiliations. We also agreed that a task as large and complex as this could only be tackled effectively if there were no divisions between the two Houses, and we have therefore worked in a wholly bicameral manner, with chairmanship of the meetings alternating between the two Co-Chairmen.

24. We have taken our responsibilities on this Committee very seriously, often meeting weekly to explore, scrutinise and challenge the evidence provided to us. Many of us began the process by being very sceptical about the need for the Programme and by querying the options presented. However, we have spent many hours poring over the detailed information contained within the IOA, and challenging the Programme and consultant teams, in order to satisfy ourselves of the need for the work. We have reached conclusions on many of the big issues, but with a programme of this scale it is inevitable that more work will be needed during subsequent phases and, where it has not been possible to reach firm conclusions at this point, we have also flagged where further work is required.

25. At an early stage in our deliberations, we agreed a number of key criteria to guide our inquiry. These were:

- to preserve the heritage of the Palace of Westminster as the home of the UK Parliament for future generations;
- to deliver value for money for the taxpayer;
- to continue the effective functioning of Parliament whilst work is happening; and
- to consider the options in the light of the current security climate.

The recommendations in this report are intended to meet these key criteria.

26. There has been one area of work which we agreed at an early stage not to consider. The 2012 Pre-Feasibility Study considered the option of constructing a new, permanent Parliamentary building elsewhere, while finding an alternative future use for the Palace of Westminster. The Study concluded that this would be likely to be the most expensive option as, in addition to the cost of a new building, the renovation and maintenance of the Palace would remain in some way or another a charge on the Treasury.³¹ As noted in paragraph 16, in October 2012 the House of Commons Commission and the House Committee of the House of Lords decided that the Palace should remain the long-term home of Parliament, and ruled out the new-build option. In the light of the clear views expressed by the decision-making bodies of both Houses, we therefore decided not to re-open this option.

³⁰ HC Deb, 16 July 2015, [col 1188](#) and HL Deb, 20 July 2015, cols [901–902](#)

³¹ [Restoration and Renewal of the Palace of Westminster: Pre-Feasibility Study and Preliminary Strategic Business Case, October 2012](#), pp 35–41

27. Unlike many of the internal matters often considered by ‘domestic committees’ of either House, given the cost, importance and national interest of the R&R Programme, we felt that it was important to seek views from as diverse a range of people as possible. On 30 November 2015 we therefore issued a Call for Evidence inviting submissions from members of the public, external organisations, interested bodies and Members and staff of both Houses. The Call for Evidence is reproduced in Appendix 2. The written evidence received is published online³² and a list of those who have submitted written evidence is included at the end of this report.

28. We have also spoken to a number of experts and stakeholders in person, both formally and informally. Given the nature of the project, some of these discussions have taken place in private in order to allow a frank discussion of issues which are sensitive for commercial, security or other reasons. However, we have also taken formal evidence in public from a number of external experts.³³ A full list of those who have briefed the Committee is included at the end of this report, and the Committee is very grateful for their assistance.

29. Over the course of the inquiry, Members of the Committee have also held informal conversations with various groups of Members from both Houses in a variety of forums, either at party meetings, in informal groups, or one-to-one discussions. The Committee is grateful to all those who contributed their views either formally or informally, in person or in writing. The breadth of views and suggestions proposed have been extremely useful in helping us to shape our conclusions.

30. We would like to thank all the officials within Parliament’s Restoration and Renewal Programme Team who have worked tirelessly over the course of the inquiry to produce papers, to provide presentations, and to lead tours around the Parliamentary Estate. While much of this work has occurred behind the scenes, their co-operation with the Committee has been essential in assisting us with our work. Finally, we would also like to extend our thanks to our Specialist Adviser, James Bulley OBE FRICS, Chief Executive of Trivandi Ltd. The wealth of knowledge and experience that he has shared with the Committee has been invaluable. However, we should make it clear that the views expressed in this report are ours alone.

31. In this report we have set out our preferred options for the delivery and scope of the Programme, and recognise that further work will be necessary in order to validate our conclusions in these areas, as well as test their feasibility. However, it is essential that Parliament now takes some key decisions on the future of the Programme and, in order to avoid a potentially costly delay, establishes the appropriate bodies in order to conduct and oversee the next phase of work. In Chapter 6, we have therefore set out a draft Motion for both Houses to consider, which would give effect to our recommendations.

32 Written evidence is published on the Committee’s [website](#).

33 Oral evidence is published on the Committee’s [website](#).

2 The need for the work

Challenging the case for the Restoration and Renewal Programme

32. At the outset of our inquiry, we decided that it would be important to challenge the fundamental assumptions underlying the Restoration and Renewal (R&R) Programme. Like many Members in both Houses, we began our work being extremely sceptical of the scale of the problem in the Palace, and the reported extent and costs of the works which needed to be carried out. Many of the problems experienced by those who work in the building regularly are relatively minor so it might appear, at first glance, that a ‘make do and mend’ approach could continue to serve both Houses well. Many MPs and Peers and their staff have offices in other buildings, so do not experience some of the persistent problems which occur in the Palace.

33. Rather than take the information presented to us at face value, we therefore spent many hours digesting and scrutinising the need for the work, requesting additional information from officials in both Houses, challenging the assumptions made to date, and seeking further opinions on the problems present within the building. In addition to listening to the staff employed by both Houses who maintain and service the building, we have sought evidence from respected institutions, including bodies of engineers, architects and surveyors, as well as those involved in the restoration and conservation of historic buildings.

34. As we progressed with our inquiry, the need for the work and the case for the R&R Programme became overwhelmingly apparent. The weight of opinion provided to us by experts has made it impossible to ignore the fact that the Palace of Westminster does now need a significant renovation programme, and that the works are becoming increasingly urgent. The work required may not necessarily be immediately visible, as much of it lies beneath the building in the basements, or hidden away beneath floorboards, in wall cavities or in roof voids. However, the fact that much of the work is hidden from view makes its necessity no less pressing, and does not reduce the potential risks which might arise if it is ignored. In this Chapter we therefore set out some background information about the size and scale of the Palace of Westminster and the need for the work.

The Palace of Westminster: a small town

35. The Palace of Westminster is in many ways like a small village or town. It is not one, single building, as built in the mid-19th Century: it includes several modern additions, constructed either within the courtyards or on top of or adjacent to existing structures. The Palace also contains a wide variety of different types of accommodation, both inside and out. This ranges from grand spaces such as the Chambers of the two Houses and Westminster Hall, to office accommodation, formal meeting rooms, informal meeting spaces, ceremonial spaces, cafeterias, restaurants, visitor areas, security screening, car parking, workshops, kitchens and a whole lot more. It is fair to say that the variety and complexity of the different types of space in the Palace of Westminster, and the intensity of their use, is unmatched anywhere else in the UK. All these different functions place different demands on the fabric of the building.

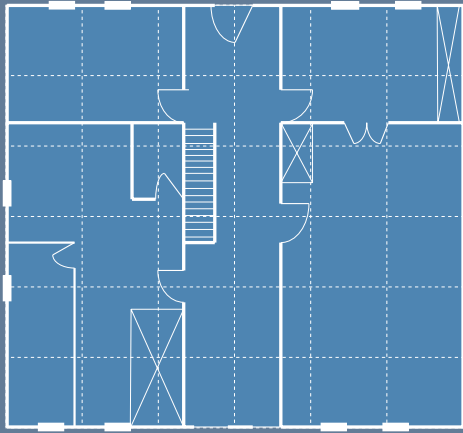
36. In places, the building contains up to six or seven floors, including the additional mezzanine floors in some areas and the basement. The Principal Floor in particular contains many ceremonial and formal areas, linked by fine corridors and lobbies with high ceilings. Table 2 provides some key facts about the building.

Table 2: The Palace of Westminster in numbers

Item	Approximate number/unit
Area	28 acres This figure represents the gross internal area of the Palace of Westminster, including all the floors, plant work, hallways, storage spaces and the underground car park (but not the external walls or courtyards).
Number of floors	6 or 7 (it varies in different parts of the Palace) This includes the Basement, Ground, Principal, Mezzanine, First, Second and Third floors.
Number of rooms	More than 1,100
Number of windows	Approximately 4,000 (of which approximately 3,800 are original bronze windows)
Area of roofs	5 acres (This represents the 'plan area' of the roofs, which is the area of the roofs as seen from above.)
Number of boilers	3 main boilers and 1 summer boiler (these are large, commercial boilers)
Number of plant rooms	128 (80% within the basement)
Number of distribution risers	98
Radiators	778
Fan coil units	701
Other heaters (electric, oil and unidentified)	272
Number of air handling units	40
Number of electric distribution boards	100
Number of heat exchangers	34
Basement corridors	1 mile
Pipework: steam system	7 miles
Pipework: low temperature hot water	4 miles
Pipework: chilled water	3 miles

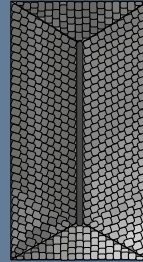
Item	Approximate number/unit
Cables	Approximately 250 miles, made up of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 mile high voltage cabling 90 miles low voltage cabling 2 miles earthing 1 mile lightning protection 2 miles system clocks cabling 50 miles fire system cabling 45 miles security systems cabling 7 miles annunciator cabling 45 miles building management systems cabling 7 miles division bell cabling
Telephone cabling	50 miles
Network cabling	110 miles
Broadcasting / sound cabling	30 miles

Source: Information provided by the Parliamentary Estates Directorate. Further information about the Palace of Westminster can be found in the [Palace of Westminster, Mechanical and Electrical](#), and [Fabric of the building](#) factsheets available on the Restoration and Renewal Programme [website](#).



The internal area of the Palace of Westminster is around as big as 16 football pitches, and the roof area is almost as big as 3 pitches.

< Internal area: 28 acres



< Roof area: 5 acres

Football pitch: 1.76 acres



The Palace has around 4,000 windows, of which 3,800 are made of bronze.



If you laid out the different building services, they would stretch as far as...

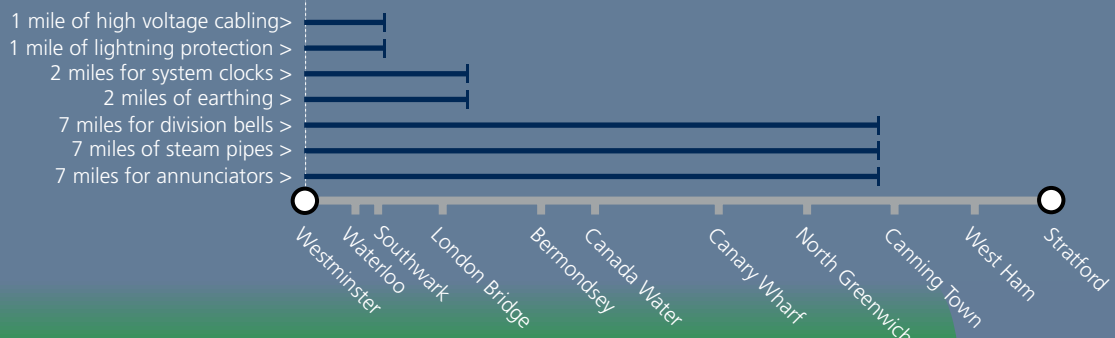
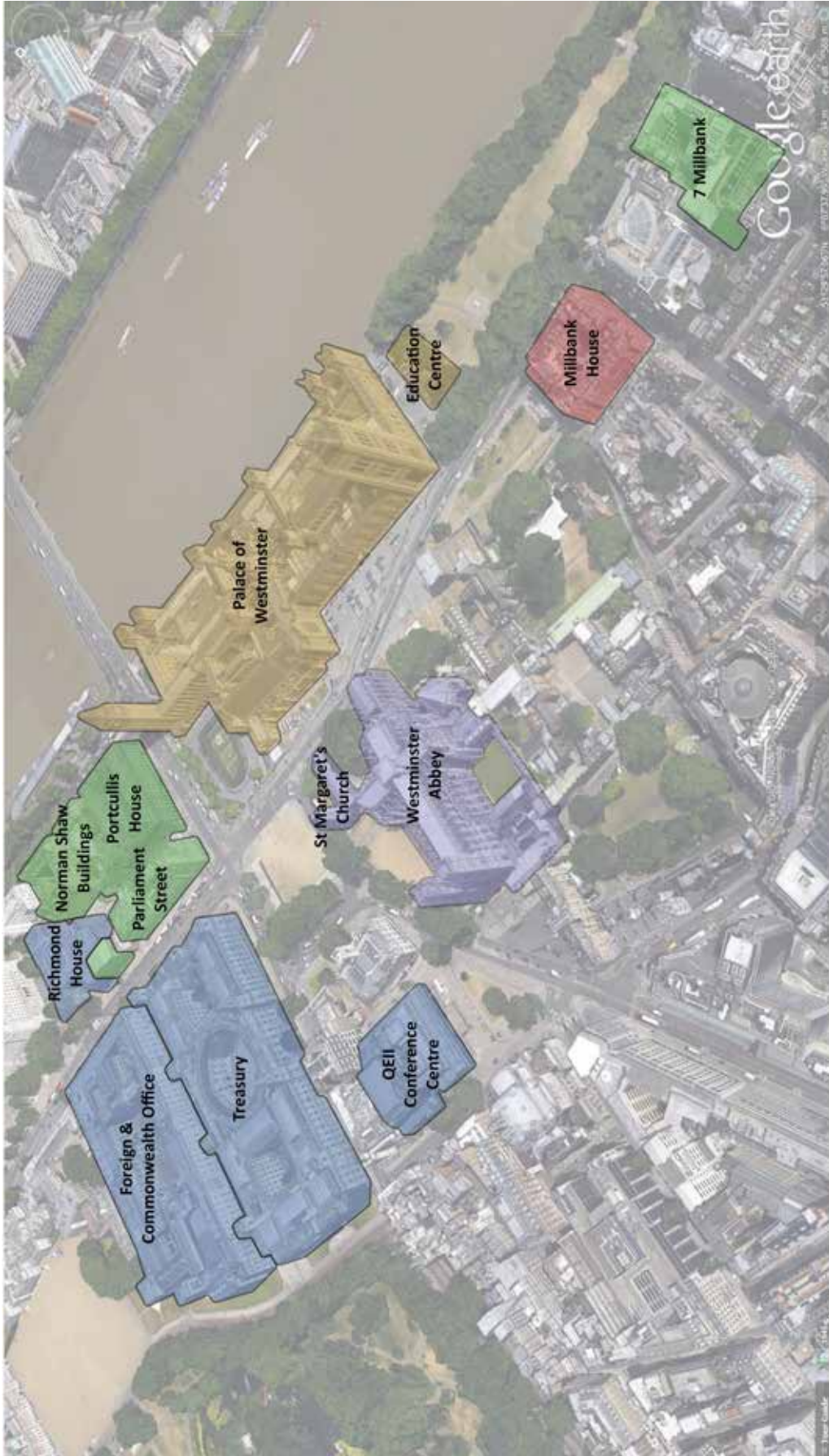


Figure 2: Map of the Parliamentary Estate and surrounding area



Source: Google with data from SIO, NOAA, US Navy, NGA, GEBCO

The wider Parliamentary Estate

37. As with any small town, the Palace of Westminster also has its surrounding areas, and the Parliamentary Estate consists of more than just the Palace. Parliament occupies several buildings in the vicinity of the Palace of Westminster, which provide accommodation and services for Members and staff of both Houses. These buildings extend from Norman Shaw North at the most northerly part of the Estate to 7 Millbank at the most southerly end. Figure 2 shows some of the buildings which make up the wider Parliamentary Estate.

The current state of the Palace of Westminster

38. Despite media reports about the Palace of Westminster ‘falling down’, the actual structure of the building is fundamentally stable. Surveys conducted for the Parliamentary authorities have confirmed that the majority of the building and its foundations are in good condition.³⁴ However, it is the services within the building which pose a real and ever increasing risk to the continuing functioning of Parliament. The majority of the works required involve the ‘back of house’ services which are collectively known as the mechanical and electrical (M&E) services.

The mechanical and electrical services

39. The term ‘M&E services’ includes a number of different services which are essential to the effective running of the building, outlined in Box 1.

Box 1: M&E services

- | | |
|--|--|
| • Gas supplies | • Voice alarm |
| • Steam heating | • Utility supply |
| • Low temperature hot water space heating | • Main switchgear and sub mains |
| • Chilled water cooling (air conditioning) | • Small power |
| • Condenser water heat rejection | • Lighting |
| • Ducted ventilation and air conditioning | • Equipment power supplies |
| • Rain water drainage | • Building controls |
| • Sewage and waste water drainage | • Annunciators |
| • Mains water supplies | • Division bells |
| • Softened water supplies | • Broadcast systems |
| • Domestic hot water supplies | • Closed-circuit television systems |
| • Hydrants | • Access control |
| • Hose reels | • Security detection |
| • Fire detection | • Police communications |
| | • Telecommunications and data services |

Source: Information provided by the Restoration and Renewal Programme Team.

³⁴ There are some localised exceptions to this: the Chapel of St Mary Undercroft, the South and East elevations of Cloister Court and Westminster Hall have all experienced some movement. However, all old buildings tend to experience this and work has been carried out in order to stabilise these areas.

40. The current location of many of these services within the Palace has been determined by the layout for heating and ventilation designed in the Victorian era. Under the supervision of Dr David Boswell Reid (a ventilation engineer), an extensive labyrinth of vertical and horizontal air shafts and tunnels were incorporated into the fabric of the building. Reid's first attempts to address heating and ventilation issues in the building were mostly unsuccessful and new primary services for heating, cooling and ventilation were inserted into these areas in the 1860s, with further renewals of the services taking place in the early 20th Century and again in the 1940s.³⁵

41. While the basements, riser shafts, under-floor compartments and roof spaces initially provided sufficient space for the various services required by Parliament, over time new systems have been installed on top of old, so that these spaces now contain a bewildering mix of various M&E services, from Victorian steam pipes to 21st Century data cables. The spaces have become extremely congested and a lot of the services are now largely uncharted. In many instances, it is not known what the cables or pipes are, where they go, or even whether they are redundant or not.³⁶

Previous attempts to address the problem

42. Throughout the course of our inquiry, many people have asked how the M&E services have been allowed to deteriorate to the condition that they are in today. This is an issue which we, as a Committee, also explored in a lot of detail with Parliamentary officials, who told us that there were several reasons for the deterioration of the M&E services within the Palace.

43. The first, and most important, aspect to note is that M&E systems have a finite life. The lifespan of different M&E services is variable but is typically in the order of 25–30 years, and the services therefore need to be replaced on a regular, cyclical basis. Even with constant maintenance, they cannot be expected to last much longer.³⁷

44. The second reason is that the condition of the services in the Palace has been exacerbated by many decades of neglect since the post-War rebuild.³⁸ There are various explanations for this, but a key driver of the deterioration has been the overriding need to avoid causing any significant disruption to the work of Parliament. This means that any work which causes noise or vibration, or which involves the temporary disconnection of services, has had to be confined to recesses. In the 1990s, this meant that the longest continuous window available for major works was the 10–12 week summer recess. Since the introduction of the Commons' September sitting in 2003, this period has fallen to around seven weeks.³⁹ Even when Parliament is in recess, it must be possible to bring both Chambers back into use at short notice, in the event of a recall. The potential of a recall of Parliament is not an insignificant issue. Both Houses have been recalled more than 25

35 Henrik Schoenefeldt, How the Palace of Westminster gets rid of all that hot air in the House of Commons (24 March 2015): <http://theconversation.com/how-the-palace-of-westminster-gets-rid-of-all-that-hot-air-in-the-house-of-commons-39135> [accessed 26 July 2016] and *Restoration and Renewal of the Palace of Westminster: Pre-Feasibility Study and Preliminary Strategic Business Case*, October 2012, p 9

36 *Restoration and Renewal of the Palace of Westminster: Pre-Feasibility Study and Preliminary Strategic Business Case*, October 2012, pp 10, 17

37 *Ibid.*, p 50

38 *Ibid.*, pp 14–15, 50

39 September sittings of the House of Commons were first introduced in 2003 and 2004, and re-introduced in 2011. In the intervening years, the summer recess was generally one or two weeks shorter than it had been before 2003. The House of Lords also held September sittings in 2003, 2004, 2011, 2015 and 2016.

times since 1948, most recently in June 2016, September 2014, August 2013, April 2013 and August 2011.

45. These reasons combined mean that the need to complete works quickly and with the minimum of disturbance has generally taken precedence over other considerations such as cost, efficiency and quality. So rolling maintenance and patch repairs to existing systems, even those which are life-expired, has generally been preferred to full-scale replacement. A further consequence of the need to complete work quickly has been the haphazard installation of systems in suboptimal locations, often on top of older, existing systems, and the failure to remove redundant elements.

46. The gradual decline of the building has also been a consequence of how Parliament has prioritised its buildings budget. As the Pre-Feasibility Study noted:

“the [M&E] systems, although increasingly antiquated, continued to work; a higher priority was given to more visible aspects of maintenance, such as the condition of stonework; and management effort was focused on the acquisition and development of Parliamentary outbuildings.”⁴⁰

The latter point needs to be understood in the context of the growing gap between the demands of a modern Parliament and the constraints imposed by its antiquated home. Lack of suitable office accommodation for Members and staff has been one of the most obvious signs of this particular tension at least since the 1960s, and the acquisition of additional buildings to provide more office space has therefore been a high priority for Parliament.

47. A further exacerbating factor has been the lack of institutional knowledge of the M&E plant and the uncertainties regarding the exact condition of the systems. The Pre-Feasibility Study noted that:

“When serious attention was given to M&E issues towards the end of the 1990s the precise condition of the basement systems was unknown, but the fact that they had not been renewed for almost 50 years (longer in some instances) was known to the Parliamentary Works Directorate and its maintenance teams”.⁴¹

The state of the mechanical and electrical services

48. The gradual neglect of the growing backlog of works has left the Palace of Westminster with a potentially catastrophic mix of services, particularly in the basements. Most people who visit the basements for even a short tour are instantly filled with concern at the number and mix of various services which are crammed into small, confined spaces. The heat and the smell are intense. Steam systems, gas lines and water pipes are often laid one on top of another, alongside electricity wires, broadcasting cables and other vulnerable equipment. The lack of records means that it is not always possible to know which cables and pipes are redundant and which are live. Leaks from the steam system and rainwater entering the building are frequent and if they were to occur in the wrong place—for example next to a major power supply or in an asbestos-filled area—have the potential to cause major damage to the Palace as well as significant disruption to the work of both Houses.

40 [Restoration and Renewal of the Palace of Westminster: Pre-Feasibility Study and Preliminary Strategic Business Case](#), October 2012, p 15

41 *Ibid.*, p 15

49. Although the main boilers were replaced in 2004, the pipes which carry steam onwards from the boilers date in some cases from the 1930s and otherwise from between 1947 and 1952. The pipes are known to be corroding and sampling suggests that in some cases they are being narrowed by limescale deposits. The 2012 Pre-Feasibility Study reported that, despite “a precautionary reduction in steam pressure in 2004, and other remedial work since 2009, leaks of steam occur continuously while the system is in operation”. In fact, the report noted that there are around seven or eight significant incidents each year, mainly in the autumn when the heating is turned back on.⁴²

50. Staff of the Parliamentary Estates Directorate do an excellent job of monitoring the services and in preventing and repairing problems as much as is possible. There is a limit, however, to what they can achieve with such an antiquated and dilapidated system. Minor events often go unnoticed by those working in the building, because steam leaks are generally repaired quickly by the maintenance teams without an impact on the operations of Parliament. However, a fracture in a confined space could lead to a “sudden release of steam at very high temperature which would destroy other services (such as electricity or computer cabling and water pipes) and distribute asbestos fibres.” In 2005, consultants warned that such an event in the vicinity of the plant room servicing the House of Commons Chamber could put that Chamber out of action for a number of months.⁴³

51. In recent years, the state of the vertical risers has caused particular concern. Of the 98 risers in the Palace, almost all contain asbestos. At the time of the Pre-Feasibility Study in 2012, 20 of the risers were classified as “complex” (meaning that they housed more than one service) and “essential”. In 2007, 10 were assessed as “requiring attention at the earliest opportunity”. In addition to the asbestos problem, there was a general difficulty in accessing the risers, which were not built with service maintenance in mind. There were few access points to the risers and the shafts were typically congested with multiple services, obstructing the ladders that had sometimes been provided. There was also little to prevent fire spreading vertically through the risers.⁴⁴

52. In 2000, a basement condition survey highlighted the fact that much of the equipment was antiquated and would need to be replaced within 5–10 years (that is, before 2010). Various lines of investigation were begun and studies commissioned, but throughout the 2000s little progress was made. By 2008, there was growing concern about the widening scope and escalating costs of tackling the M&E services, so it was decided to revisit the assumptions behind the work completed so far, and to challenge the previously-agreed assumption that the work must be carried out without disrupting the business of Parliament.⁴⁵

53. A feasibility study of decant options was therefore conducted by consultants and officials from both Houses. It reported in July 2009 and concluded that the previous approach to modernising the M&E services (namely scheduling all necessary work over a ten-year period without disrupting the work of Parliament) entailed high risks to business continuity. As an alternative, the study suggested that modernisation of primary and secondary services (and other improvements) should be delivered over a shorter period.

42 *Ibid.*, p 17

43 *Ibid.*, pp 17–18

44 *Ibid.*, p 18

45 *Ibid.*, pp 15–16

Such a strategy would require an acceptance that Parliamentary functions would have to be relocated while the work was carried out.⁴⁶

54. The 2012 Pre-Feasibility Study reported that, in the light of this advice, “the authorities of both Houses agreed to halt previous plans, adopt a medium-term strategy to buy time, and to begin work on a fully integrated long-term strategy.”⁴⁷ The R&R Programme is a result of the development of that long-term strategy.

Current work to tackle the mechanical and electrical services

55. The medium-term programme to tackle the M&E services began on site in 2010 and was completed in the summer of 2016. Its aim was to upgrade some of the most critical plant rooms and risers. The programme has refurbished the selected areas, removed asbestos, replaced plant work and ensured that the selected areas are fit for purpose for the next 20 years. However, the programme has only replaced plant work in the selected risers and plant rooms, not the adjacent plant, so new installations have been connected to existing, older infrastructure.

56. Although the medium-term programme of works has allowed Parliament to buy time and to address the services at the greatest immediate risk, the need to fundamentally overhaul the M&E services has not gone away. Most of the M&E services throughout the building are operating way past their expected expiry date, we still do not know where many of the cables and pipes run (or whether they are still live) and most of the services are buried within cavities too small and congested to access properly, often surrounded by dangerous asbestos. Alan Baxter Ltd, an engineering consultancy which has worked within the Palace for a number of years, described the condition of the M&E services as follows:

“The M&E services which by their nature spread everywhere in particular are in a complete state of disorganisation, because of ad-hoc discrete and local alterations which have meant that, as in many other buildings, there is no overall clarity and strategy. Many cables and pipes in parts of the building are unidentifiable. Fundamentally these services need complete renewal in a way which will confirm a clear strategy can be maintained, going forward, as the services are altered and extended into the future.”⁴⁸

57. Within this context, the current works to try to rectify the problems simply cannot keep pace with the rate at which the services are continuing to fail. It is like trying to fill a bathtub with a thimble while the water is draining out of the plughole at the other end. Put simply, under the current medium-term approach, the risk of significant failure will continue to grow more quickly than it can be mitigated. Although it is impossible to say when a crisis might strike, there is a substantial and growing risk of either a single, catastrophic event, or a succession of incremental failures in essential systems, which would lead to Parliament no longer being able to sit in the Palace.

46 *Ibid.*, p 16

47 *Ibid.*, p 16

48 Written evidence from Alan Baxter Ltd ([RAR0055](#))

58. Addressing the M&E services will be expensive, and will account for approximately 74% of the cost of the essential works.⁴⁹ But there is now a real risk of cumulative or catastrophic failure of essential buildings services. This risk is already significant and will continue to rise, despite intensive maintenance activities and recent interim risk reduction work, and the consequences of continuing to ignore the problem are unthinkable.

Other essential works

59. While the M&E services are the main driver for the Restoration and Renewal Programme, there are also a number of other essential works which need to be carried out. The Pre-Feasibility Study set these out in detail, but a brief summary of some of the main issues is below.

Water penetration

60. All those who work within the Palace will be aware that water penetration is a relatively common occurrence in the Palace, ranging from damp patches on walls and ceilings to serious floods. The causes of the water penetration include leaking roofs, faulty guttering, and faults in water tanks, pipes and lavatories.⁵⁰ While some leaks can be fixed relatively quickly, the complex construction of the Palace means that others can take many days or weeks to trace and repair, and in many areas this can lead to significant damage to the heritage fabric of the building. As heavy rainfall in the summer of 2016 has shown, many of the gutters and culverts are no longer able to cope with the volumes of water involved and flooding is now a frequent occurrence in the Palace.

61. Current work to repair and replace the cast iron roofs will help to prevent water ingress through those roofs, and the gutters attached to those roofs will also be tackled at the same time. However, many of the gutters and downpipes around the Palace are built into the building's fabric so as to be concealed behind the stonework, and cannot easily be replaced without completely dismantling the surrounding structure. Without a major programme of repairs which addresses these hard-to-reach places, water ingress will continue to cause serious damage to the building. Repairing and replacing old pipes and gutters as part of the R&R Programme would help to reduce the risk of future damage due to water penetration. It would also be a more cost-effective solution than attempting to tackle these problems as a separate project.

62. As for drainage, the Victorian drainage pipes and culverts under the Palace have to cope with waste water, rain water, sewage and cooking by-products on a scale for which they were never originally intended. These are pumped into the London sewers at the North end of the Palace. The drainage system still works, but it requires continual maintenance to keep the channels clear.⁵¹

49 Information provided by the Restoration and Renewal Programme Team. This figure includes the cost of replacing the M&E services, as well as the cost of associated work to access those services and to reinstate and make good any affected building structure or fabric. The percentage is based on the capital costs (construction only) of scenario E1A in the Independent Options Appraisal, based on a P50 confidence level (explained in Chapter 3) and applying the same assumptions as the Independent Options Appraisal.

50 [Restoration and Renewal of the Palace of Westminster: Pre-Feasibility Study and Preliminary Strategic Business Case](#), October 2012, p 18

51 *Ibid.*, p 18

Figure 3: Water leaks in the basement



Figure 4: Water damage caused by a blocked roof gully



Asbestos

63. The Palace of Westminster is riddled with asbestos. The Pre-Feasibility Study noted that asbestos is believed to be present in almost every riser (98 vertical shafts that carry services between floors, most running the full height of the building), as well as in many plant rooms, corridors and under-floor voids. While encapsulated asbestos is deemed to be safe while undisturbed, it is extremely dangerous when it is damaged and fibres become airborne. Such damage may be caused by leaking steam or water, or by drilling, cutting or vibration, which is unavoidable when significant building work is carried out. Accessible asbestos has been encapsulated to make it safe, but it has not always been encapsulated where pipes pass through walls and voids, or under floors. Furthermore, where the encapsulation is damaged, or where cables pass through risers and voids and dislodge asbestos dust and debris, it can present a significant danger.⁵²

64. One example of the danger posed by asbestos was brought home in 2015 when it was thought that asbestos fibres might have been present in the air provided to the House of Commons Chamber. During upgrade work on one of the air ducts which supplies air to the Chamber, a small section of duct was removed and asbestos dust was found to be present within it. Subsequent tests demonstrated that the risk was negligible on that occasion.⁵³ However, if the results were different next time and asbestos fibres were found to have contaminated air ducts, it is easy to see how one of the Chambers, committee rooms or other essential offices might have to be closed down immediately and could be out of action for a significant period of time.

⁵² *Ibid.*, p 19

⁵³ Written answer by Sir Paul Beresford on 9 June 2015 ([1032](#))

65. The presence of asbestos in the Palace therefore impedes not only the remedial works themselves, but the preparatory investigation and survey work which is necessary to establish the current state of the assets. Asbestos removal must be undertaken in many areas before further work can even be planned. Furthermore, there is a continual threat of cleared areas being re-contaminated from uncleared areas.⁵⁴ A thorough renovation of the Palace would allow this asbestos to be removed safely and more cost-effectively.

Fire safety

66. The ventilation shafts and voids which house most of the M&E services were originally intended to move large volumes of air around the building, thus unintentionally providing an ideal route for a fire to spread quickly.⁵⁵ In recent years, Parliament has been fortunate in avoiding a major outbreak of fire. However, the Pre-Feasibility Study noted that between 2008 and 2012 (when the Study was produced), 40 minor fires had been recorded, and that there had been some evidence of smoke travelling through architectural voids, “confirming that current compartmentation is unreliable.”⁵⁶ A fire with potentially more serious implications occurred on the afternoon of 10 June 2016, on the roof of the plant room adjacent to Peers’ Inner Court. The fire was quickly discovered and extinguished, but if the same incident had occurred at night, at a weekend, or in a less prominent location, it could have had far more serious consequences.⁵⁷

67. Recent examples, such as the 2015 fire at the Clandon Park National Trust property show just how quickly fire can travel through old buildings, from basement to roof, and the complete devastation it can leave behind. The Palace of Westminster’s main problem is the lack of effective fire compartmentation between sections of the building. While ongoing fire safety works in the Palace aim to improve Parliament’s standard of compliance with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005, full compartmentation has never been achieved. In particular, the basements are considered to be the highest fire-risk areas due to the congested M&E services crammed into those spaces, the difficulty of access for the London Fire Brigade, and the absence of smoke clearance provision.⁵⁸

68. Works which can be undertaken in an occupied building are being carried out ahead of the R&R Programme, such as installing high pressure mist systems and replacing the fire detection and voice alarm system. However, recent fire protection work has focussed on ensuring the safety of people within the building. The current fire safety provisions do not provide a sufficient means of protecting the building and its heritage assets.⁵⁹

Secondary services

69. Secondary services are those which deliver heating and cooling to rooms and corridors, electricity and data services to sockets, and water and drainage to and from bathrooms and kitchens. Limited work on secondary services has taken place in connection with some maintenance work, but the lack of a general programme to upgrade the secondary

54 [Restoration and Renewal of the Palace of Westminster: Pre-Feasibility Study and Preliminary Strategic Business Case](#), October 2012, p 19

55 *Ibid.*, p 19

56 *Ibid.*, p 20

57 Information provided by the R&R Programme Team.

58 [Restoration and Renewal of the Palace of Westminster: Pre-Feasibility Study and Preliminary Strategic Business Case](#), October 2012, p 20

59 Information provided by the Parliamentary Estates Directorate.

services in recent decades means that problems have built up. One example of this is the heating system where, although some individual radiators have been replaced, there has been no general programme to replace the first-generation radiators installed after the move away from open fires, or to update the pipework that connects them.⁶⁰

70. Another example is the electrical system. Despite requirements growing over recent years, electrical distribution capacity is limited by the size of distribution boards, which are often installed in small basement spaces. Many electrical cable conduits are too small to run new cables through, so floors and walls have to be dismantled to access the cables and install new conduits. This is further hampered by not knowing where many of the cables run to and from. In inaccessible and asbestos-affected areas, there are still some cables made of vulcanised India rubber, dating from the 1950s, which is now considered a fire risk. There is also a significant amount of wiring dating from the 1960s, which is still in use way beyond its normal replacement cycle of around 25 years.⁶¹

Figure 5: Cabling



Following rationalisation of the 3,500 cables running through plant room B, some 800 cables proved impossible to remove, in some cases because they could not be identified.

60 [Restoration and Renewal of the Palace of Westminster: Pre-Feasibility Study and Preliminary Strategic Business Case](#), October 2012, pp 20, 21

61 *Ibid.*, p 21

Figure 6: Telephony

This is a current working telephony system. There are approximately 20 of these banks around the Palace, and over 1,400 individual terminal points spread over those 20 banks.

The overall condition of the Palace of Westminster

71. The Pre-Feasibility Study, published in 2012, outlined the full scale of the problem faced within the Palace of Westminster. It said that there was no way of precisely quantifying all the risks to business continuity and health and safety. However, the report noted that fire is generally regarded as the greatest single threat to heritage buildings. While risks arising from long-term underinvestment and dilapidation were also very difficult to quantify, they ranged from high probability but low impact risks (such as frequent minor breakdowns and inconvenience) to lower probability but higher impact risks of catastrophic failure. The report said that breakdowns of systems in critical locations on sitting days “would cause significant disruption to the functioning of Parliament.”⁶²

72. The Pre-Feasibility Study therefore concluded the following about the Palace:

“Its building services (heating, cooling, water, sewage, electricity, cabling for specialised systems) have been kept functioning, albeit with increasing difficulty and growing risks. However, there has been no general renovation of the building and its services since the partial rebuilding of 1945–50 and some of the services are older still. The original basements and vertical shafts are now crammed with pipes and cables making further work difficult and expensive. Asbestos is present throughout the building and, although it remains safe if treated with great care in compliance with safety regulations, it complicates and prolongs any intervention. Much of the work undertaken over the past half-century is undocumented and since many areas are inaccessible, the state

62 *Ibid.*, p 27

of dilapidation and therefore of risk is largely uncharted. The condition of the building impedes modern fire safety approaches and it has proved impossible so far to implement effective fire compartmentation. The original roofs are no longer watertight and there is extensive evidence of penetrating damp in many parts of the Palace as well as damage from interior leaks and floods.”⁶³

73. Since the publication of that report, ongoing maintenance work has continued to address the areas of the building most at risk, and to try to ensure that the building is safe and watertight. However, the fundamental problems with the building cannot be properly addressed in such a piecemeal fashion. Furthermore, continuing rolling maintenance does not allow the services within the building to be repaired in a coherent and strategic manner. Each piece of work has to be scheduled around the working patterns of the House and the cramped constraints of the building, meaning that there is little scope to review the services as a whole or to ‘future-proof’ them.

74. Replacing all the M&E services as part of one programme, on the other hand, would enable the entire infrastructure for the Palace of Westminster to be redesigned and repaired in a coherent and sensible manner. Furthermore, if that new system were designed in a more segmented and orderly fashion, it would allow future repairs to particular areas to be conducted more easily and cost-effectively without having to remove layers of other services in the process. A building-wide approach such as this, with future-proofing designed into the process, should ensure that another programme of this scale is never required again.

75. We endorse the findings of the Pre-Feasibility Study on the Restoration and Renewal of the Palace of Westminster and conclude that there is a clear and pressing need to tackle the backlog of work required in a comprehensive and strategic manner. The mechanical and electrical services are the main driver for the Restoration and Renewal Programme, but there are many other essential works which should be tackled alongside this work as a matter of urgency, such as works to prevent water penetration, asbestos removal, fire safety works and replacement of secondary services.

76. The longer the essential work is left, the greater the risk becomes that the building might suffer a sudden, catastrophic failure, or that small, incremental failures might make the building uninhabitable. The need to tackle the work speedily has greatly influenced our deliberations on the preferred way in which to deliver the work.

63 *Ibid.*, p 5

3 Delivery option

How the work should be delivered

77. The IOA assessed three possible delivery options for conducting the R&R Programme, ranging from a rolling programme of works, to partial decant, to a full decant of the Palace of Westminster. For each of these delivery options the IOA estimated the likely duration of the Programme according to a number of different probability, or confidence, levels. Table 3 outlines the three delivery options and their estimated durations.

Table 3: Delivery options included in the IOA

Delivery Option	Definition	Likely schedule (based on a P10–P90 confidence level)
E1 (enabled)	A rolling programme of phased works over a significantly prolonged period of years but still working around the continued use of the Palace of Westminster. This could include the adoption of longer Parliamentary recesses, over many years.	Construction schedule would be in the range of 25–40 years (P10-P90), with 32 years being the most likely (P50).
2	A programme incorporating a partial decant of the Palace of Westminster with each House moving in turn to temporary accommodation, and closure to Members and the public of broadly half the Palace of Westminster in turn for a prolonged period.	Construction schedule would be in the range of 9–14 years (P10-P90), with 11 years being the most likely (P50).
3	A programme incorporating a full decant of the Palace of Westminster and an associated programme of works necessary to deliver the restoration and renewal of the Palace.	Construction schedule would be in the range of 5–8 years (P10-P90), with 6 years being the most likely (P50).

Source: Deloitte LLP, [Palace of Westminster Restoration and Renewal Programme Independent Options Appraisal](#), September 2014, Volume 1, pp 5, 11

78. The original Option 1, which was included at the request of the two Houses, assumed a rolling programme of works under current Parliamentary constraints (such as the usual lengths of recesses and working to currently agreed levels of disruption to the work of both Houses). This was ruled out at an early stage of the analysis because it would not be able to meet the programme objectives. In order to keep open an option which involved a rolling programme of works, an ‘enabled’ Option 1 (E1A) was therefore developed which would include the acceptance, by both Houses, of many years of significant nuisance and noise and longer Parliamentary recesses. This option would involve different parts of the building, including both Chambers, being vacated and then re-occupied as the works progressed, with the building of temporary structures in the courtyards and other open spaces within the footprint of the Palace. Option E1A also assumes that alternative Chambers would have to be available off-site in the event of a recall during a recess.⁶⁴

⁶⁴ Deloitte LLP, [Palace of Westminster Restoration and Renewal Programme Independent Options Appraisal](#), September 2014, Volume 1, pp 5, 57–58

Costs

79. As described in Chapter 1, the IOA estimated the possible costs of the R&R Programme under a range of scenarios, each combining an outcome level with a delivery option. Table 4 gives a brief summary of the likely capital expenditure of each scenario, broken down into various sub-categories.

Table 4: Total capital expenditure of shortlisted scenarios in the IOA (£bn, based on a P50 confidence level, at Q2 2014 prices as reported in September 2014)

Category	Scenario E1A	Scenario 2A	Scenario 2B	Scenario 3B	Scenario 3C
Definition of scenario	A rolling programme of works and local decant, with minimal outcome level (meeting all legislation and building policy)	A partial decant, with minimal outcome level (meeting all legislation and building policy)	A partial decant, with enhanced amenities and functions over and above meeting legislation and building policy	A full decant, with enhanced amenities and functions over and above meeting legislation and building policy	A full decant, with significantly enhanced amenities and functions over and above meeting legislation and building policy
Construction works	£0.83	£0.73	£0.84	£0.72	£0.81
Construction delivery	£0.42	£0.32	£0.37	£0.24	£0.27
Programme management	£0.34	£0.30	£0.33	£0.27	£0.29
Inflation	£1.60	£0.84	£0.95	£0.67	£0.74
Risk	£1.46	£0.91	£1.02	£0.72	£0.80
Sub-total (excluding Decant)	£4.65	£3.10	£3.51	£2.62	£2.91
VAT	£0.93	£0.62	£0.70	£0.52	£0.58
Sub-total (including VAT)	£5.58	£3.72	£4.21	£3.14	£3.49
Decant / reoccupation	£0.09	£0.22	£0.22	£0.38	£0.38
Total (£bn) (including Decant)	£5.67	£3.94	£4.42	£3.52	£3.87

Source: Deloitte LLP, [Palace of Westminster Restoration and Renewal Programme Independent Options Appraisal](#), September 2014, Volume 1, p 63

80. As a Committee, we have not simply taken these figures at face value, and we have spent a lot of time interrogating and challenging these numbers. We have also looked at

the breakdown of the different sub-categories, in order to assess what the true cost to the taxpayer might be of each of the scenarios. As a result of that work, we note several caveats about the costs published in the IOA.

81. First, it is important to stress that the figures quoted in the IOA are *not* budgets for the Programme. They are high-level estimates of the broad orders of magnitude which each scenario might cost. Each scenario was modelled using several different confidence, or probability, levels which therefore led to a range of possible costs and programme durations for each scenario. The figures for capital expenditure, shown in Table 4, were based on a P50 confidence level within the estimated ranges (in effect, this means that there is a 50% chance that the costs might be lower, and a 50% chance that the costs might be higher). *It is not possible to set a precise budget for the Programme at this stage.* As part of further feasibility work it will be imperative, therefore, that a thorough business case should be prepared, balancing costs against value in order to assess and validate the preferred options in more detail. The establishment of a Delivery Authority, overseen by a Sponsor Board (see Chapter 5), will be an essential enabler of this process. Once the Delivery Authority has developed more detailed plans, it would then be right for Parliament to be invited to approve the concept design and corresponding budget for the Programme (further details on the future governance of the Programme are outlined in Chapter 5).

82. Secondly, Table 4 contains several sub-categories of cost which many people would not necessarily include in the true cost of renovating the Palace of Westminster. While it is correct, from an accounting point of view, to include these costs, they do not necessarily represent the real cost to the taxpayer. For example, VAT is returned to the Treasury, so does not represent a net cost to the Exchequer. Nor does inflation represent a genuine outgoing, except insofar as construction cost inflation generally exceeds the Retail Price Index.

83. Thirdly, the estimated decant costs in the IOA provide a broad estimate of the costs which might be incurred in acquiring and fitting out temporary accommodation for the period of the R&R Programme. For Delivery Option 1A, this was based on the use of temporary structures within the Palace precincts (in courtyards, for example). For Delivery Options 2 and 3, it was based on the freehold acquisition of one or two hypothetical buildings. If, as we propose later in this report, it is possible to use buildings which are already in public ownership, then there would be minimal cost to the public purse in acquiring them (although the costs of those buildings might fall to Parliament rather than the Government). In paragraphs 148-193 we explore the possible options for temporary accommodation in more detail.

84. Fourthly, the figures attributed as “risk” in the IOA are contingencies to allow for changes to the budget as a result of unforeseen changes to the Programme’s scope, delivery or schedule. Expert witnesses have told us that with large, complex programmes, it is sensible to include a large allocation for risk at the beginning of a programme. Given that Parliament is still only in the very early stages of its R&R Programme, the IOA makes a large allocation for “risk” as part of its overall capital expenditure calculations. However, it is likely that the risk allowance will fall as the Programme progresses, and the degree of uncertainty about the scope of the Programme falls.

85. Finally, it is important to consider the cost of the R&R Programme in the light of the ongoing maintenance costs of the Palace of Westminster (shown in Table 5). When a budget for the R&R Programme is set, we would expect this to include all repair and renovation costs for the period of the Programme, so Parliament would not be spending additional money on renovation during those years.

Table 5: Annual expenditure on repair, renovation and restoration of the Palace of Westminster

Financial Year	Expenditure
2007/08	£27.6m
2008/09	£18.4m
2009/10	£31.6m
2010/11	£29.2m
2011/12	£29.3m
2012/13	£36.3m
2013/14	£42.2m
2014/15	£48.7m (provisional, subject to audit)

Source: Written answer by Sir Paul Beresford on 15 June 2015 ([1774](#))

86. In Chapter 6 we set out some of the next steps for the Restoration and Renewal Programme. As part of those next steps, detailed specifications and timetables for the Programme will need to be developed. Once those plans have been refined, detailed budgets will also need to be calculated, which Parliament will be invited to approve in due course.

Why is the Palace of Westminster so expensive to renovate?

87. As part of our deliberations, we considered why the projected costs in the IOA were so much higher than for other, comparable projects. The IOA references the cost of the R&R Programme against 14 comparator projects, including the conversion of Middlesex Guildhall into the UK Supreme Court, two projects at the Victoria & Albert Museum, and the refurbishment of Manchester Town Hall.⁶⁵ It also tested the schedule and risk against other major projects at a similarly early level of programme maturity.⁶⁶ The IOA noted that while the choice of reference projects allows comparison to be made with different elements of the R&R Programme, there is no single building or project that can provide a valid comparison to the Palace of Westminster.

88. It is important to understand why the projected costs of the R&R Programme are not directly comparable to other projects. Most of the additional cost is attributable to the complexity of the M&E work. The M&E plant in the Palace is highly complex, supporting both cultural and institutional functions. The building's large and mobile population means that every space has to have heating, ventilation and air-conditioning systems which are capable of dealing with a high peak capacity. The reference buildings typically have a less dense and more evenly distributed population, or a single space

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, Volume 2, Appendix A.4

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, Volume 2, Appendix B.1

(such as an auditorium) with a high population density. Parliament's extensive network of broadcasting equipment—more than 100 cameras and 800 microphones across 33 locations across the whole of the Parliamentary Estate (all routed through the Palace)⁶⁷—is probably unique outside the world of professional broadcasting. The building has 12 kitchens serving numerous outlets (which it would be possible to rationalise under the Programme). The Palace is also a hub for M&E services which link to other buildings (security, data, annunciator and broadcast systems), which will have to be protected, diverted and kept live during the works in order to ensure continued service to operational buildings elsewhere on the Parliamentary Estate.

89. The site is large and complex, and moving equipment and materials around it will be a challenge. For example, there are only a few access points to the basements, and many of the internal corridors are narrow. Heritage items which remain *in situ* during the works will have to be protected both from physical damage and from fluctuations in temperature and humidity. In addition, the security requirements of the Palace significantly add to the financial and logistical problems inherent in the Programme. Even with the building fully vacated, special security measures will be required.

90. Another contributing factor is that the Palace of Westminster is exceptional in terms of the proportion of high-quality areas as a percentage of the total floor area, and in the quality of its decoration. It is highly compartmentalised, which means there is a high proportion of internal walls—most of them with high quality finishes—in relation to floor area. Finally, the sheer size and complexity of the Palace of Westminster means that it is not directly comparable to a single building in an easily accessible site. Instead, the Palace is a collection of various buildings within a secured and constrained site.

91. The Palace of Westminster is not, therefore, directly comparable to many other historic buildings such as cathedrals, Oxbridge colleges or stately homes.

International comparisons

92. While there is no direct comparator to the Palace of Westminster, it is worth noting that the Palace of Westminster is not the only parliamentary building in the world undergoing major renovation work. Over the past few years, the R&R Programme Team has been in contact with a number of other Parliaments who are in the process of restoring their buildings in order to gather ideas and to share lessons learned. Four of the parliamentary programmes researched by the Programme Team (in Canada, the Netherlands, Austria and Finland) are being driven by the need to replace infrastructure, in a similar way to the R&R Programme.

93. In Canada, refurbishment has begun on several 19th and early 20th Century buildings on the parliamentary estate in Ottawa, involving the future relocation of both Chambers to temporary accommodation.⁶⁸ In the Netherlands, the group of buildings known as the Binnenhof, where Parliament is located, now need major restoration. In this case, it is proposed that all of the buildings should be closed at the same time in order to complete the work more quickly, requiring the relocation of both Houses of Parliament.⁶⁹ Austria

67 Information provided by the Director of Parliamentary Audio/Video.

68 Government of Canada website, *Follow the rehabilitation of the parliamentary buildings*: <http://www.tpsgc-pwgsc.gc.ca/citeparlementaire-parliamentaryprecinct/rehabilitation/index-eng.html> [accessed 26 July 2016]

69 Government of the Netherlands website, *No-frills renovation of Binnenhof parliament buildings*: <https://www.government.nl/latest/news/2015/09/25/no-frills-renovation-of-binnenhof-parliament-buildings> [accessed 26 July 2016]

is also engaged in a similar programme of works, with a full decant of its 19th Century Parliament building being planned from 2017.⁷⁰ Finally, in Finland, the Parliament building is currently closed for a major refurbishment, scheduled to finish in 2017.⁷¹

94. There are a number of other parliamentary renovation programmes which provide useful comparators and the R&R Programme Team is continuing to liaise with officials in other countries. Furthermore, parliamentary officials are also gathering information and assimilating lessons learned from the construction of new parliamentary buildings in the United Kingdom, including the Scottish Parliament, the National Assembly for Wales and Portcullis House.

Advantages and disadvantages of each of the delivery options

95. One of the key tasks we set ourselves was to assess, at a high level, the preferred approach for delivering the work. We have worked closely with the Programme Team in order to assess the viability of each of the delivery options, as well as to analyse and investigate the potential impact that each delivery option would have on the work of Parliament, its Members, staff and those who visit the building. Each of the delivery options involves some kind of compromise and choosing between them inevitably involves weighing up various conflicting demands. Further feasibility work will be required by the Delivery Authority in order to validate our conclusions and to make the necessary arrangements for temporary accommodation. However, based on the extent of our work so far and the evidence available to us, in this section we set out some of the advantages and disadvantages of each of the delivery options and outline our rationale for what we see at this point to be the preferred option.

Schedule and cost

96. Given the pressing need for the work, it would clearly be sensible to tackle the work by the quickest and most effective means possible, while still allowing the business of Parliament to continue with minimal disruption. In terms of schedule alone, the IOA concluded that full decant (Option 3) would deliver the Programme in the shortest time, partial decant (Option 2) would take significantly longer, and the rolling programme of works (Option 1) would be the longest option.⁷² There are various reasons for this: full decant provides maximum flexibility in scheduling and sequencing the works, it demands no compromises between the needs of the contractors and the needs of a working Parliament, and it does not entail the installation of the substantial, temporary M&E plant which would be required to keep all or part of the building operational under Options 1 and 2.

97. When it comes to cost, the IOA outlines projected ranges of costs in a variety of formats, and the ranking of each of the options will inevitably be affected by the assumptions made and the calculations used. As a Committee, we have spent a great deal of time scrutinising the figures contained within the IOA, and questioning the consortium which produced

70 Republic of Austria Parliament website, *Renovation of the Austrian Parliament*: <https://www.parlament.gv.at/ENGL/GEBF/SAN/> [accessed 26 July 2016]

71 Eduskunta website, *Renovation of Parliament's properties*: <https://www.eduskunta.fi/EN/tietoeduskunnasta/peruskorjaus/Pages/default.aspx> [accessed 26 July 2016]

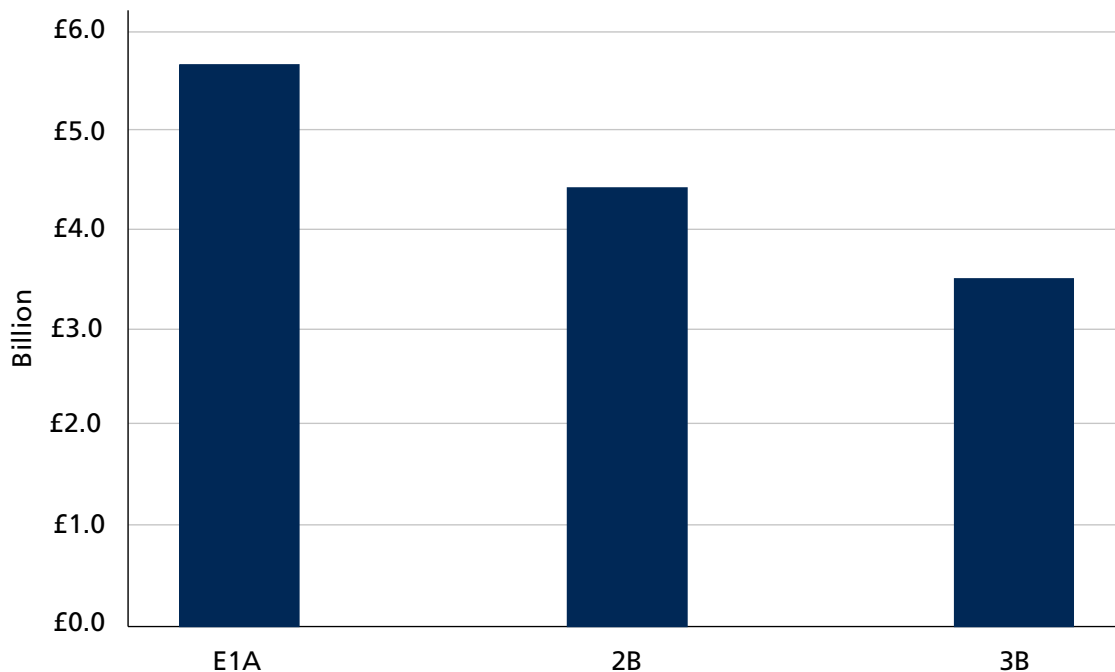
72 Deloitte LLP, *Palace of Westminster Restoration and Renewal Programme Independent Options Appraisal*, September 2014, Volume 1, pp 10, 24

the IOA. In particular, we questioned why the IOA focuses so much on cost, rather than value.

98. The IOA was not able to attribute cash values to some of the potential benefits of the Programme (for example, improvements to access and circulation around the building) and so could only calculate the Net Present Cost of the various options, rather than the Net Present Value. It is worth noting that the IOA consortium did ask Parliament for such values on the potential benefits, but the R&R Programme Team were, understandably, not able to ascribe such values at the point of the IOA. This is because ascribing such values would inevitably be a subjective task and one for the politicians in both Houses, not officials. So, once both Houses have considered this report, a full and thorough business case will be developed in which the potential benefits of the Programme (outlined in this report) will be calculated and taken into consideration.

99. The IOA concluded, however, that the capital cost of the R&R Programme would be “most significantly impacted” by the selected delivery option and the overall duration of the Programme, rather than by the outcome level.⁷³ In other words, it is *how* we choose to deliver the Programme, rather than *what* work we decide to do (beyond the necessary minimum) which has the greatest impact on capital cost. While none of the figures in the IOA should be taken as actual budgets, of all the scenarios costed within the IOA those involving a full decant (Delivery Option 3) were clearly projected to have the lowest capital cost, as well as to provide the greatest opportunity to achieve benefits.

Figure 7: Capital expenditure of scenarios E1A, 2B and 3B



This bar chart illustrates the capital expenditure of scenarios E1A, 2B and 3B, based on a P50 confidence level and the most likely programme duration. Capital cost differentials between scenarios are principally influenced by the delivery option and not by the outcome level.

Source: Deloitte LLP, [Palace of Westminster Restoration and Renewal Programme Independent Options Appraisal](#), September 2014, Volume 1, pp 10, 18

Feasibility: risks to the Programme

100. One of the major issues which we examined throughout our inquiry was the feasibility of each of the delivery options. The expert witnesses we heard from gave us a clear steer that it would be far more feasible to conduct the works safely and securely if the building were fully vacated. Mr Nick Mead, President of the Chartered Institution of Building Services Engineers (CIBSE), told us that keeping part of the building operational throughout the works would be a significant challenge which would slow the programme down considerably. He noted that, because the M&E services in the Palace were not fully charted, it would not be possible for engineers to tackle repairs in one area with any certainty that they would not affect services in other parts of the building. Previous experience working with old buildings had shown that it was often easier to “know that everything was coming out, rather than just trying to do bits and pieces.”⁷⁴

101. Mr David Hirst, Chair of the Management Panel at the Institution of Civil Engineers (ICE), told us that Delivery Option 3 had clear advantages over the other two options:

“Emptying the building and allowing the investigation works to be carried out, and providing clear access to a range of contractors over a period of time to do the works, offers the best, simplest and lowest-risk option. It is not without risk—there are still significant risks with that option—but it is the most straightforward option.”⁷⁵

He added that Option 2 (partial decant) would be “a very complex activity to manage” and that it would be more expensive as a result. He thought that it would be very difficult to see the end of Delivery Option E1 (a rolling programme).⁷⁶ The ICE also felt that the timescale and disruption associated with Option 1 meant that there was “a high risk of it being abandoned after a few years.”⁷⁷

102. Another matter of concern to witnesses was the management of asbestos-related risks, which CIBSE described as a “critical precursor to providing full and safe access” to the M&E services. The ability to do this work safely would be a “compelling consideration” when deciding between Delivery Option 2 and 3.⁷⁸ Mr Hugh Feilden, Chair of the Conservation Advisory Group at the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA), also emphasised the asbestos problem:

“As soon as you open up a void and find asbestos, you have to stop everything, tent up and make it safe. If you are doing it bit by bit, that really slows the process down and accelerates and increases the disruption, and you may find yourself doing that again and again, because asbestos is not the only nasty substance around. That is why I personally would recommend going for an option of partial or full decant—simply to have operational effectiveness.”⁷⁹

74 [QQ 64 and 65](#)

75 [Q 66](#)

76 [Q 67](#)

77 Written evidence from the Institution of Civil Engineers ([RAR0042](#))

78 Supplementary written evidence from the Chartered Institution of Building Services Engineers ([RAR0066](#))

79 [Q 63](#)

103. CIBSE concluded that, although finding enough decant space to enable a full decant of the Palace would be a significant challenge,

“The restoration of the Palace of Westminster is a massive undertaking, which can only sensibly be undertaken on a whole building scale. The additional complexities and uncertainties of a phased refurbishment would create a very significant potential for cost overruns and delays of time. Given the uncertainty around the precise state of the Palace, and the state of the building services, any contract for phased restoration and refurbishment would contain significant elements of contingency.

To minimise this risk the joint committee should obtain the agreement of parliament as a whole to vacate the whole site for the duration of the refurbishment. This is the only sensible, realistic engineering approach to the project. It may create challenges for parliamentarians, but if this is to be a proper refurbishment which addresses decades of decay and arguably false economy to deliver a parliament building fit for the 21st century at good value to the electorate who are funding it, then it needs to be a systematic, whole building, whole life approach.”⁸⁰

Feasibility: disruption to the work of Parliament

104. As well as risks to the Programme, Options 1 and 2 also present a significant risk to the smooth running of Parliament. Under Option 1, the Programme would run to such a slow timetable that there would be a high risk of existing plant failing before it could be reached in the sequence of works. In the words of the IOA,

“Delivery Option E1 provides the slowest rate of operational risk reduction given the piecemeal nature of the delivery of the Programme, with the greatest potential residual risk of a catastrophic event such as fire or flood as a result of life expired services, fabric and structure.”⁸¹

105. In this sense at least, Option 1 has little to recommend it over doing nothing, since it would involve living with the current risk for many, many years. While scenario E1A might be superficially attractive, the IOA concluded that it would bring with it “the longest overall schedule duration with high levels of delivery risk ... over a protracted period stretching into decades”.⁸²

106. Delivery Option 2 would be little better. It would still mean living with the outdated and antiquated M&E systems for a prolonged period of time, with the ever increasing risk that there may be a catastrophic failure at any point. Coupled with this would be the extreme inconvenience and disruption of working alongside a busy construction site for over a decade.

107. Judging the level of disruption likely caused to Parliament under each of the delivery options is difficult. Factors like noise, vibration and other inconvenience—certain routes around the building being closed for prolonged periods, for example, or loss of access

80 Written evidence from the Chartered Institution of Building Services Engineers ([RAR0063](#))

81 Deloitte LLP, [Palace of Westminster Restoration and Renewal Programme Independent Options Appraisal](#), September 2014, Volume 1, p 25

82 *Ibid.*, p 24

to offices and amenities—are difficult to predict and even more difficult to quantify. Some argue that it will be essential to retain some sort of presence within the Palace of Westminster throughout the Programme and, during our informal discussions, Members of both Houses have indicated to us that they would be willing to tolerate increased levels of disruption during the works.

108. However, the degree of disruption that would be involved in continuing to operate a Parliament within a busy construction site cannot be overstated. Delivery Option E1, which would entail Parliament staying within the Palace of Westminster, would involve a significant amount of disturbance to the work of both Houses. In particular, it would mean both Chambers having to be relocated elsewhere in the Parliamentary Estate for between two to four years each, at separate points in the Programme. This would mean that a temporary structure would be required within the precincts for up to eight years, for occupation by one or other House. The challenges of trying to run an effective Chamber under such conditions are significant, and it would be difficult to see how adequate provision could be made for the essential procedural offices which need to surround the Chamber, as well as for the press and the public who would need continued access to the temporary Chamber. Furthermore, there would be significant security and safety risks to overcome if either House was to stay on site during the works.

109. Option E1 would also involve a continuous sliding-block puzzle of decant and reoccupation as the works progressed around the building. It is worth contemplating what this would mean in reality: constant, loud noise and vibration from drilling and hammering, and from the operation of heavy machinery; loss of circulation routes around the building; loss of car parking spaces; loss of natural light, of lavatories, of catering facilities, of committee rooms, of meeting space; the ever-present risk that somebody will slice through the wrong pipe or wire, cutting off power, water, heating or ventilation; increased activations of the fire alarm; traffic congestion around the building site; and risks to the safety of occupants. If, and only if, Parliament were willing to tolerate that degree of disruption, and the works did not end up being abandoned part way through, then the Programme could probably be brought to a conclusion around the middle of the Century (though it is unlikely that a majority of the current occupants of the building would be there to see the work finished).

110. Delivery Option 2, meanwhile, could turn out to combine the worst of all options. It would involve a lot of the disruption and inconvenience of Option 1, with the House remaining *in situ* having to operate around a busy and highly complex building site in the other half of the building. In addition to this, Parliament would still have to acquire and fit-out temporary accommodation for one House first, and then for the other House afterwards, without the advantage of keeping the two Houses co-located. It is important to note that it would not just be the Chamber that would be relocated under this scenario, but all the offices, services, and staff from that House, which would need accommodating in temporary accommodation as well. During the period of the works the two Houses would be physically separated, with access to the remaining House probably severely hampered due to the construction site operating alongside.

111. An alternative scenario for Option 2 proposed by some Members was that the House of Commons should remain on site throughout, occupying one half of the building at a time, while the House of Lords moved to temporary accommodation for the entire period of the Programme. However, this scenario too would be far from ideal. For the House of

Commons, it would mean MPs with offices in Portcullis House and the Norman Shaw buildings having to traverse a major building site to access the temporary Commons Chamber in the Lords. For the House of Lords, it would probably mean being out of the building for over a decade.

112. During our deliberations, we have also had to take account of the current security climate and the possible implications of each of the delivery options. Under Delivery Option E1, the Palace would become one large construction site, with hundreds of contractors, heavy machinery and specialised equipment being brought into the building to work alongside Members, staff and visitors who would require constant access to the building in order to allow the business of both Houses to continue. This would obviously require extensive planning and thorough zoning of different areas in order to manage security risks. Even under Delivery Option 2 (a partial decant) the construction site and one of the two Houses of Parliament would be operating immediately adjacent to each other. While security threats are there to be managed, scenarios which involve Parliament staying on site would add an extra level of complexity to an already complex and costly programme.

113. Taken together, the issues outlined above have led us to the inevitable conclusion that there would be serious doubts about the feasibility of Delivery Options 1 or 2.

Scope

114. Each of the delivery options would enable the minimal amount of works (Outcome Level A) to be carried out, which was a core programme objective. However, not all the options would offer the same scope to make further improvements to the building. This is both because some of the bigger adaptations or alterations to the Palace could be carried out only if the M&E services were completely disconnected, and because continual access to the construction site by users of Parliament would hinder some of the larger construction works suggested as part of a wider remit.

115. Mr Feilden said that it would be easier for designers to restore the building in a strategic, coherent way if they had access to the whole building at once. With a full decant, the design team would have an opportunity to look at the building as a whole and develop building-wide strategies, particularly for the M&E systems.⁸³ Our briefings with officials in both Houses have also pointed to the clear conclusion that many of the issues outlined in Chapter 4, such as visitor routes, disabled access and Parliament's working environment, could be better tackled in a single phase.

Wider impacts

116. As well as improvements to the Palace and the work of Parliament, the R&R Programme presents opportunities to deliver wider benefits. One of these is the potential to stimulate a specialist employment sector and create skills opportunities for future generations. The Programme will require a significant number of skilled trades and crafts in the conservation and heritage sectors on a scale rarely if ever seen before in a single project. It therefore represents an opportunity to provide a substantial programme of training and apprenticeships to develop the next generation of skilled craftspeople in the

83 [Q 71](#)

heritage sector, supporting the many small, specialised companies in that field.⁸⁴ Given that Delivery Option 3 would take place over a shorter timeframe, the greater intensity and throughput of work over a shorter period would maximise the potential to realise this benefit.⁸⁵ We add a note of caution in this regard though, as one of the risks to carrying out Delivery Option 3 is that there might not be sufficient skills to conduct the works in a short timeframe. This is an issue which we consider in more detail in Chapter 6.

117. Another opportunity presented by the R&R Programme is the chance to engage with members of the public about the work required to the Palace of Westminster and, alongside that, about the ongoing work of Parliament. Again, the conclusion of the IOA was that Delivery Option 3, which would generate “the most rapid and thus visible rate of change”, might enhance the opportunity for public engagement (a subject to which we return in paragraph 143).⁸⁶

Implications for the business of both Houses

118. Many witnesses have commented that the R&R Programme would be the ideal opportunity to change some of the procedures and practices in both Houses, particularly those which might be affected by the physical limitations of temporary accommodation. This Committee was established in order to consider the best way to proceed with the R&R Programme, and we have therefore chosen to focus our inquiry around the key strategic decisions which will need to be taken as part of the construction programme.

Ceremonial requirements

119. There will be various ceremonial issues which will need to be considered further if the Palace of Westminster is to be fully decanted during the period of the works. Large ceremonial events in Parliament range from predictable, regular events (such as State Opening and Prorogation) to occasional events (such as addresses by foreign Heads of State) and completely unpredictable events (such as a Lying-in-State). In addition, there are a whole host of smaller, ceremonial events which take place in Parliament every day which are dependent to some extent on the layout of the Palace of Westminster. These include daily routines such as the Speaker’s and Lord Speaker’s processions and the walking of messages and bills between the two Houses.

120. We recognise that some of these events might need to be modified or adapted in certain ways while both Houses are in temporary accommodation. It might also be necessary for some ceremonial events to be held in alternative locations and there are plenty of suitable locations, such as the Banqueting House, in central London. This will be a matter for both Houses to determine in due course. We also note that it might be necessary for Parliament to use another building (separate from either temporary Chamber) for large occasions, such as the State Opening of Parliament. This is an issue which the two Houses will need to consider in further detail in conjunction with other stakeholders, such as the Royal Household. In all instances, we are confident that it will be possible for suitably dignified alternative arrangements to be made for all of the ceremonial events which take place in Parliament.

84 Written evidence from the Royal Institute of British Architects ([RAR0035](#))

85 Deloitte LLP, [Palace of Westminster Restoration and Renewal Programme Independent Options Appraisal](#), September 2014, Volume 1, pp 25, 77

86 *Ibid.*, p 25

Impact on staff

121. We recognise that a decant from the Palace would have a significant impact on the staff of both Houses. While many staff are already based in other buildings on the Parliamentary Estate (rather than the Palace), many others have worked within the Palace for decades and, for some, their jobs may revolve around the fabric of the building itself. As a Committee, we have been appointed to make recommendations on the strategic decisions which Parliament now needs to face. We made our Call for Evidence available to staff of both Houses, and we are grateful to those who have responded. However, we have been mindful throughout our inquiry that it is for the administrations of both Houses to manage the impact on, and communications with, staff affected by the Programme. We have not, therefore, undertaken detailed analyses of what each of the delivery options might mean for staff in different departments of either House. It goes without saying that a decision to relocate both Houses to an alternative location would have significant implications for staff, many of which will require further thought. We stress that continuing communications with staff about the changes will be vital in managing the transition to any temporary accommodation, and urge the two administrations to ensure that this happens.

Delivery option: conclusions

122. On the basis of the evidence we have received, we conclude that it would be a mistake to attempt to carry out the Restoration and Renewal Programme while Parliament remains in full occupation of the building. It would involve taking considerable risks with public money, with the continuity of the work of Parliament, and with the future of the Palace itself. The overwhelming risk is that the level of disruption caused to Parliamentary business by the Programme, or *vice versa*, would become intolerable, and another solution would have to be sought mid-Programme, with all the concomitant expense and upheaval that would entail. Option 1 is also likely to require the greatest capital expenditure, and present the least scope for delivering improvements to the building.

123. Option 2, involving a decant of first one House and then the other, would also be extremely risky. With the Palace split in two, site logistics (for both the operational House and the Programme) would be a challenge. There would be significant risks which would be difficult to manage, including security, fire and health and safety risks. Delivering the M&E work would be more difficult and expensive, as the M&E plant serves the whole building, and temporary services would have to be installed to serve the operational part of the building. Although the degree of noise and nuisance might not be as great as under Option 1, we cannot be confident that Parliament would be able to tolerate the level of disruption entailed with Option 2.

124. By contrast, on the basis of the expert opinions provided to us, it appears that Option 3, involving a full decant of the Palace of Westminster, would deliver the Programme in the shortest possible timeframe, is the most feasible from an engineering and security point of view, likely involves the lowest capital cost, and presents the fewest risks to the Programme and to the work of Parliament.

125. We recognise that there is still work to be completed in order to validate our conclusions. One of the most important stages which will need to follow is the completion of a full and thorough business case, which should assess the value of each of the delivery

options, as well as the potential cost. To inform the final decision, we hope that the business case will be able to take account of some of the potential benefits of the Programme which we outline in Chapter 4.

126. In Chapter 5 we recommend the establishment of a Delivery Authority to take the Programme forward, and it will be for this body to carry out further work on our preferred way forward. That Delivery Authority will also need to assess in more detail the feasibility of a full decant, which must be demonstrated clearly and beyond doubt. The feasibility will be dependent on the acquisition of appropriate temporary accommodation for both Houses, and on the availability of sufficient skills in the building and heritage sectors. These obstacles should not be insurmountable provided that both issues are planned for at an early stage, but again, it will be for the Delivery Authority to validate our assumptions in this area before any final decision is made.

127. The analysis in the Independent Options Appraisal, and all the independent, expert evidence we have received, have pointed us to one clear conclusion: that a full decant of the Palace of Westminster is the best delivery option in principle. It allows the works to be completed in the shortest possible timeframe, it minimises the risk of disruption to the day-to-day operation of Parliament, it is likely to involve the lowest capital cost, it minimises the risk to safety of construction operatives and occupants, it minimises the risk to the Programme itself, and it provides the greatest scope for meeting the needs of a 21st Century Parliament building.

128. Subject to that option being determined to be feasible, achievable and cost-effective, and eventual validation by the Delivery Authority, we recommend that the Restoration and Renewal of the Palace of Westminster should be conducted in a single phase, with both Houses moving out to temporary accommodation for the duration of the works.

Temporary accommodation: issues for consideration

129. In order to facilitate a full decant of the Palace of Westminster, sufficient temporary accommodation will have to be acquired and fitted out for use by both Houses. We have spent a lot of time considering whether it would be possible to relocate both Houses during the period of the works and we have scrutinised many possible locations for temporary accommodation. At this stage, such consideration has been at a relatively high level, and has involved the broad examination of whether either House could fit into particular buildings, rather than the production of specific designs or layouts. Over the next couple of years, Parliament will have to undertake a thorough assessment of the requirements of each House so that the essential needs of Members, staff and others can be taken into consideration as far as possible in developing the plans for temporary relocation. It is envisaged that this work will be begun by the Programme Team and then taken forward by the Delivery Authority once established (see Chapter 5). In the course of our inquiry, however, we have identified some of the main considerations which should be taken into account when selecting temporary accommodation.

Location

130. The first question which arises is where both Houses should be relocated. The Scottish National Party Westminster Parliamentary Group suggested that, if both Houses were to

be decanted during the period of the works, they should both be relocated elsewhere in the United Kingdom rather than in London.⁸⁷

131. There are superficial attractions to Parliament sitting outside London. It would make Parliament more accessible, for a few years at least, to people in the region to which it relocated, and it might be possible in principle to acquire or construct the necessary accommodation more cheaply outside the capital. However, we have concluded that such a move should be avoided.

132. First, as described in paragraph 37, both Houses own a number of buildings around the Palace of Westminster which are currently used by Members and staff. These stretch from Portcullis House and the Northern Estate, to buildings such as Millbank House in the Southern Estate. These buildings house a large number of Members' offices, as well as many committee and meeting rooms. If Parliament were to relocate outside of London during the works, it would mean abandoning these buildings for the duration of the Programme, thereby increasing very significantly the requirement and cost of decant space.

133. Secondly, there is the issue of proximity to Whitehall. The United Kingdom's Parliamentary system revolves around the fact that Ministers are, with a very few exceptions, Members of one or other House of Parliament and, in order to discharge their duties both as Members and as Ministers effectively, they need access to their own departments, to other Government departments, and to Parliament on a daily basis. While alternative arrangements could be made to accommodate a situation in which Parliament and Government were geographically remote from each other, it would represent a fundamental re-writing of the terms of trade between the two and would likely lead to a reduction in Ministerial accountability to Parliament, and in the topicality of Parliamentary proceedings. The alternative would be to relocate a large proportion of the current occupants of Whitehall to the same location as the temporary Parliament.

134. Lord Butler of Brockwell, who served as Cabinet Secretary and Head of the Civil Service for a decade, described the problem as follows:

“I have no doubt in saying that Parliament needs ready access to Ministers and *vice versa*. Departments also need ready access to Ministers and *vice versa*. It is an old-fashioned syllogism. The three need to be closely co-ordinated if Government is to work properly.”⁸⁸

135. Mr Peter Riddell, Director of the Institute for Government, also supported this view. He noted that the Institute for Government had conducted interviews with Ministers and one of the consistent points raised was that Ministers felt there was a “gap” between their departments and Parliament. Ministers did not spend as much time in Parliament “as perhaps they should” and civil servants did not always understand sufficiently the importance of Parliament to Ministers. In his view, “if you separated them further, that problem could get much worse.”⁸⁹

87 Written evidence from the Scottish National Party Westminster Parliamentary Group ([RAR0044](#))

88 [Q 25](#)

89 *Ibid.*

136. We have therefore concluded that the option of temporarily locating Parliament outside London during the works, while attractive in many ways, carries an unacceptable burden of cost and inconvenience, which would otherwise be avoided.

Co-location of the two Houses

137. During our informal conversations with Members of both Houses, co-location was felt to be a very important factor in choosing possible temporary accommodation for both Houses. While both Houses can (and do, to a large extent) operate independently, there are a lot of links that it would be detrimental to lose. Some formal proceedings between both Houses, such as the physical exchange of messages and bills, for example, could be adapted during the occupation of temporary accommodation. However, there are many varied interactions which could not be replicated if the two Houses were to be located far away from each other. This includes formal proceedings such as Joint Committee meetings, which require Members of both Houses to attend, all of whom need to be within a reasonable distance of their own Chamber in order to attend divisions. It also includes a wide range of informal meetings, including but by no means confined to the work of all-party parliamentary groups, party political group meetings, bicameral briefings on legislation and civil society events held for Members of both Houses. Members attach a great deal of importance to the day-to-day interaction between the two Houses, and we therefore feel that the temporary accommodation for both Houses should be located fairly close together.

138. It is clear that the two Houses of Parliament and Government need to be located close to each other. The location of temporary accommodation a long way from Whitehall would add significantly to the cost and logistical complexity of the R&R Programme, and introduce numerous challenges for the smooth operation of both Parliament and Government. Furthermore, unnecessary additional cost can be avoided if Parliament can continue to make use of its current buildings on the Parliamentary Estate during the R&R Programme. We therefore conclude that the temporary accommodation for both Houses for the period of the R&R Programme should be located as close to the Palace of Westminster as possible.

Accessibility

139. In Chapter 4 we highlight some of the accessibility issues within the Palace which will need to be addressed as part of the R&R Programme. Accessibility will also need to be factored into any designs and decisions for temporary accommodation. In particular, Members told us that design decisions regarding temporary accommodation would need to take account of considerations such as car parking or drop-off spaces for disabled people, the distance from wheelchair-accessible Underground stations (such as Westminster), the provision of accessible lavatories, the suitability of audio equipment in the temporary Chamber and committee rooms, and many other issues. An equality analysis, conducted by Parliamentary officials, has already provisionally assessed the various equality issues which will need to be considered as part of the Programme. Once preferred locations for temporary accommodation have been selected, further equality analyses will be conducted in order to assess these issues in more detail.

Legacy

140. The largest legacy of the R&R Programme will, of course, be a restored and renewed Palace which is fit for the 21st Century and beyond. Other potential legacies might include the legacy of skills and greater public engagement with the work of Parliament, as outlined in paragraphs 143-145. However, there is also potential to ensure a legacy from the temporary accommodation used during the period of the Programme.

141. No detailed designs have yet been developed for any of the potential temporary accommodation options, and so it is not possible at this stage to say with any certainty what they might subsequently be used for, or whether either House will wish to keep them long term. It might be that some of the temporary accommodation acquired for the purpose of the Programme will be sold or leased at the end of the Programme. If not, alternative uses that have been suggested to us include an interactive, informative visitor centre or Parliamentary museum, a permanent education centre (to replace the temporary centre currently located in Victoria Tower Gardens), a ‘spare’ Chamber for business continuity purposes (but which could also be used for school visits and Youth Parliament debates), a permanent conference facility, or even a heritage centre for those who wished to access the Parliamentary Archives.⁹⁰ While each of these ideas would need investigating in much greater detail, there is certainly scope to ensure that any temporary accommodation acquired and developed for Parliament could be put to good use after the R&R Programme has been completed.

142. We recommend that, in the design and fit-out of any temporary accommodation, subject to the need for a cost-effective and economic solution, consideration be given to the possible uses to which the buildings might be put when the R&R Programme has concluded, including their onward sale if appropriate.

Public access and engagement

143. It is obviously essential that the public should have continuous access to Parliamentary proceedings. We agree with the Parliamentary Visitors Group who told us that the public would expect access to the temporary site of Parliament, including the Chambers and committee rooms, in order to see Parliament at work. They suggested that there might also be a market for commercial tours in temporary accommodation, because of the curiosity value.⁹¹

144. In terms of the Palace, the Visitors Group suggested that members of the public might also welcome being able to visit the Palace of Westminster during the works, in order to view the renovation work. If this were not possible, for security or safety reasons, then “viewing points” or “remote cameras” could also be used in order to inform and involve the public throughout the works.⁹² Ms Penny Young, Librarian and Director General of Information Services in the House of Commons and Chair of the Parliamentary Visitors Group, told us that the R&R Programme presented an opportunity to “rebuild” Parliament’s relationship with the public, using the renovation work to engage the public in a discussion about

⁹⁰ A separate programme, the Archives Accommodation Programme, is currently considering the future location of the Parliamentary Archives. It is expected that a decision on the future of the Parliamentary Archives will be made by the House of Commons and House of Lords Commissions, after both Houses have taken a decision on the Restoration and Renewal Programme.

⁹¹ Written evidence from the Parliamentary Visitors Group ([RAR0059](#))

⁹² *Ibid.*

the building work, and using that “as an opportunity to communicate what Parliament is about.”⁹³ The Group also suggested that Parliament’s existing education and outreach services could build on interest in the Programme through community engagement.⁹⁴

145. Professor Matthew Flinders and Dr Leanne-Marie McCarthy-Cotter, from the Sir Bernard Crick Centre at the University of Sheffield, said that the R&R Programme should be viewed as a “vibrant and positive opportunity for democratic renewal” and that the Programme presented an opportunity for “designing *for* democracy”. They argued that the Programme would provide an opportunity to look more strategically at what an effectively functioning parliament might look like, particularly in the context of rising levels of political disengagement and the public’s changing expectations regarding access, visibility and performance.⁹⁵

Media access

146. Media access to Parliamentary proceedings is an essential feature of any modern democracy, and proper provision will need to be made for the media during any period of decant. The Parliamentary Press Gallery stressed to us the importance of allowing members of the press continued access to the work of Parliament. Mr Craig Woodhouse, Chairman of the Press Gallery, appreciated that there would have to be a certain amount of “make do and mend” during the works. However, he stressed that it would be vital for members of the press to be close to the Chambers and to Members of both Houses. He told us that the Press Association maintains a constant presence in both Chambers, with their journalists working on rotation, so they in particular would need to be “as close as possible to the Chambers themselves” during decant.⁹⁶ Mr Tony Grew, Honorary Secretary of the Parliamentary Press Gallery, stressed that it was important for journalists to be able to work in Parliament “and physically see the Chamber at work.”⁹⁷

147. Mr Woodhouse also told us that the media would be keen to retain live broadcast points close to the Chambers during any potential decant from the Palace. Close access to Members and broadcast points near the Chamber were essential for covering big events in Parliament and for “grabbing MPs and getting people to speak on TV”.⁹⁸

Options for temporary accommodation

148. After considering the various factors which would be important when selecting any temporary accommodation, we also assessed some specific options. As a decision has not yet been taken by both Houses on the best way to conduct the R&R Programme, it has been too early to commission and develop detailed proposals for temporary accommodation. Detailed feasibility work, including the commissioning of surveys, assessments of needs, negotiations with current landlords, and detailed design proposals, will all need to be undertaken by the Delivery Authority as part of the next phase of the Programme. However, preliminary feasibility work has been conducted and officials have identified some possible locations for temporary accommodation for both Houses in the

93 [Q 54](#)

94 Written evidence from the Parliamentary Visitors Group ([RAR0059](#))

95 Written evidence from Professor Matthew Flinders and Dr Leanne-Marie McCarthy-Cotter, Sir Bernard Crick Centre for the Public Understanding of Politics, University of Sheffield ([RAR0006](#))

96 [Q 3](#)

97 *Ibid.*

98 [Q 4](#)

Westminster area, based on current knowledge about the use of space in the Palace. We have spent many hours considering the various options available, examining in broad terms how well they would suit both Houses, especially in terms of location and general fit. In this section we outline our conclusions in response to this initial feasibility work.

Westminster Hall

149. One of the first questions we asked was whether it would be possible to locate a Chamber in Westminster Hall. At first glance, Westminster Hall appears to be an ideal space to locate one of the Chambers during the R&R Programme, and there is an attraction in Parliament retaining a foothold in its historic home. However, despite our various attempts to find a way to make this option feasible, the Westminster Hall option also has a number of significant obstacles.

150. First is the structure of the Hall itself. The floor is thought to date from the early 19th Century and consists of large York stone slabs spanned between grids of dwarf brick walls. The walls are supported off a concrete raft that is not reinforced and the York stone slabs are delicate. Throughout our exploratory work, we have been adamant that neither Chamber needs to be replicated exactly and we have been willing to consider various compromises in order to see whether constructing a temporary Chamber in Westminster Hall might be possible. However, there are certain standards that would need to be met in terms of accessibility and security, and any temporary Chamber which could meet these requirements would, in all likelihood, be too heavy to be supported by the floors in Westminster Hall without the risk of causing damage.

151. Furthermore, there are M&E services which run underneath Westminster Hall and the 'W' rooms which will need to be replaced as part of the R&R Programme. This will involve the removal of a significant amount of asbestos directly underneath the steps of Westminster Hall, and along the sides, requiring unrestricted access to the Hall for a lengthy period of time. Even if a temporary Chamber could be constructed in Westminster Hall for most of the Programme, it would therefore need to be moved again when the M&E work in and around the Hall needed to be conducted.

152. There is also the medieval hammer-beam roof. The roof was constructed at the end of the 14th Century and is the largest medieval timber roof in Northern Europe.⁹⁹ Any temporary structure in Westminster Hall would need to be supported by temporary services, including heating, ventilation, air conditioning, electricity, broadcasting, and many others. Experts have suggested that it would not be advisable to heat the entire Hall without building an enclosed pod, because the dramatic change in environmental conditions would threaten the medieval roof. Even if a temporary Chamber were contained within a closed pod, it would be difficult to eliminate the risk of long-term damage if the Chamber was to remain in the Hall for a number of years. Maintaining access to the Hall would also be likely to cause disruption to the many construction vehicles which would need to enter and move around New Palace Yard.

153. Finally, a Chamber in Westminster Hall would be subject to much of the noise and other nuisance which make Delivery Option 1 so unappealing. In paragraph 128 we recommended a full decant of the Palace that would allow the R&R Programme to proceed in the cheapest, quickest, least disruptive way possible. This means that, even if a

99 Information taken from the [Living Heritage](#) pages of the Parliamentary website [accessed 26 July 2016]

temporary Chamber could be constructed in Westminster Hall, it would be located away from Member and staff offices, and separated from all the other services and facilities which Members and staff rely on. A temporary Chamber located in Westminster Hall would then just become an isolated space adjacent to a construction site.

154. For these reasons, the construction of a temporary Chamber in Westminster Hall would be impractical, and it is not an option which we recommend. We note that it might be possible to use the Hall for occasional, special events, though only if it was possible for them to be planned and scheduled around the R&R works.

Courtyards and car parks on the Parliamentary Estate

155. Having ruled out Westminster Hall as a way to remain on the Parliamentary Estate, we invited the R&R Programme Team to consider the feasibility of constructing temporary Chambers in one or more of the courtyards or car parks within the Parliamentary Estate. Various scenarios were explored and tested, and as a Committee we took the view that we would be willing to compromise on many elements of the design and layout of the temporary Chambers if it would enable one or both Houses to remain on site. Unfortunately, the overall conclusion was that comparable difficulties to those which arise with Westminster Hall would apply to these options.

156. Any temporary Chamber in a courtyard would need to be supported by a whole raft of temporary M&E services. These would have to be supplied by a skeleton of temporary services running the length of the building, passing through the courtyards, car parks and connecting spaces. Such temporary services would be extremely costly to build and would severely disrupt vehicle access through the Palace, hampering access by delivery vehicles, getting in the way of heavy equipment and disrupting emergency fire routes.

157. If the benefits of a full decant of the Palace were to be realised, then offices within the building would be closed and Members and staff would be located elsewhere. This would mean that Members and staff would have to leave their offices outside the Palace and walk through a working construction site, avoiding the temporary services running throughout the courtyards, just to access the Chamber. It is difficult to see how the essential procedural services could be provided to the Chamber without additional offices also being established next to the temporary Chamber, thereby increasing the size and cost of any temporary structures which would have to be built in the courtyards. It is also implausible to think that regular access for members of the public could be maintained while also ensuring the safety of visitors.

158. Building a temporary Chamber in either of the underground car parks would be no less problematic. Although the car parks in New Palace Yard and underneath Abingdon Green are already underground, significant additional excavations would be required in order to create enough space for a temporary Chamber. As with the other options, a whole host of temporary services would also need to be installed for the period of the Programme.

159. In our opinion, these options would create so much disruption to the smooth functioning of the R&R Programme that they would fundamentally undermine the advantages which accompany a full decant. Furthermore, as with Westminster Hall, if both Houses were to decant from the Palace, any temporary Chamber in a courtyard

or car park would also be isolated from Member and staff offices, in the middle of a busy construction site. To put it another way, constructing a temporary Chamber in an inner courtyard or a car park would entail many, if not all, of the inconvenience and risk associated with scenario E1. For these reasons, we decided to discount these options.

160. We have also examined whether the underground car park in New Palace Yard might be kept open for parking during a full decant of the Palace of Westminster. The IOA evaluated Delivery Option 3 on the basis of a complete decant, assuming that there would not be access to the car park. However, we appreciate that many Members rely on the car park in order to access Parliament, especially when arriving or leaving at unsociable hours of the day. Without knowing the precise implications of keeping the car park open (in terms of time and cost disruption to the Programme), we are not in a position to be able to make a firm recommendation on this issue at this stage. However, we note that this is a matter which will need to be considered further in the next phase of the Programme and our preference would be for the car park to be kept open if possible, or otherwise for alternative arrangements to be made.

Victoria Tower Gardens, Abingdon Green and Parliament Square

161. In order to try to stay as close to the current Palace of Westminster as possible, we considered the option of constructing temporary Chambers on various green spaces around the Palace, including Victoria Tower Gardens, Abingdon Green and Parliament Square. The first consideration to note here is that Parliament does not own all of these spaces, so to even consider them as possible sites overlooks one of the most fundamental considerations—that they would first have to be acquired and then planning permission sought—which would not be straightforward.

162. Putting this large issue to one side, it is likely that the size, complexity, and corresponding cost of any temporary structure would be great. While, in the commercial world, many temporary buildings are constructed for short-term public events, such simple, light structures would not be suitable for long-term use, over several years, by either House of Parliament. This is because a temporary structure built in any of the green spaces around the Palace would need to be large enough to house a Chamber, strong and secure enough to meet all the current security guidance, and equipped with a whole raft of temporary services, including heating, lighting, air conditioning, drainage, broadcasting and IT, to name just some. The temporary Chamber could not operate in a vacuum and so would also need to be surrounded by enough office space to house the staff and services necessary to allow business in the Chamber to operate effectively.

163. Looking at each option in turn, Victoria Tower Gardens is a large and open space but, even if it could be acquired for the period of the Programme, the Gardens would likely be required as a possible site for construction facilities such as plant, materials, contractors' offices, facilities for workers and much more. All of this activity is likely to have significant implications for the traffic flows in and around the Palace but it is difficult to see where else the construction site might be placed. Furthermore, constructing a temporary building which would be large enough to accommodate a Chamber and its supporting services, and which would also meet the security criteria required, would be extremely costly. As the building would have to be removed after the R&R Programme, there would be no scope for legacy benefits.

164. Abingdon Green is close to the buildings currently owned by the House of Lords and would therefore be a convenient place to locate a temporary Chamber. However, the building would need to be strong and substantial enough to comply with current security advice, and it might not be possible to support such a construction on top of the underground car park. The site is rather small and so the number of offices and services which could be located around the Chamber would be limited. Furthermore, the same problem would arise as with Victoria Tower Gardens: building a large, temporary building on the site for a period of a few years would be extremely expensive and provide little scope for any legacy value.

165. Parliament Square is located close to Commons buildings and so, at first glance, could provide an ideal location for a temporary House of Commons Chamber. However, in addition to the problems of cost, issues to consider would be the significant levels of disruption which would likely arise if Parliament Square had to be closed to traffic, as well as the visual impact that such a new structure would have in the middle of a World Heritage Site.

166. Taking all of these problems together, we have also discounted these scenarios.

Horse Guards Parade

167. At an early stage of our inquiry, we considered the possibility of constructing a temporary building on Horse Guards Parade. As with some of the options outlined above, it is worth noting that Horse Guards Parade is not within Parliament's hands, and so the use of this space would not necessarily be possible. Putting this consideration to one side, one of the major advantages to using this site would be its size, as it would easily be large enough to accommodate either one or both Houses for the period of the Programme. It would also be very convenient for access to Government departments along Whitehall.

168. However, this option also has one very significant drawback, which is its distance from other buildings on the Parliamentary Estate. One of the key criteria which we believe should be used in selecting temporary accommodation is the continued occupation of existing Parliamentary buildings as far as possible, to minimise the cost of alternative accommodation. Horse Guards Parade is more than half a mile from Lords' offices on Millbank and although the Commons offices on the Northern Estate are much nearer, the lack of any secure connection would introduce a potential security risk to MPs moving between sites. The use of Horse Guards Parade would therefore only work if all Members' offices, not just those within the Palace, were moved to the site and incorporated into one secure campus. This would be possible in theory, but it would significantly increase the size and cost of the temporary structure required, when compared to relocating only those facilities which are currently within the Palace.

169. Because of these logistical and cost hurdles, we decided to discount the use of Horse Guards Parade, though we note that if further feasibility work on either of our preferred options were to identify an insurmountable obstacle, then this option might need to be re-opened.

Other buildings in the Westminster area

170. Officials in the R&R Programme Team have also considered, at a very high level and without engaging with owners or occupiers, other buildings in the Westminster area, and discounted them. This was because, putting aside the significant consideration that the owners of those buildings might not wish to lease them to Parliament, most of them were not of sufficient size. Very few buildings are actually big enough to accommodate a structure the size of a Chamber,¹⁰⁰ even without all of the other facilities which would need to be relocated from either House.

The River Thames

171. Some have suggested to us that Parliament could construct one or more temporary buildings on rafts which could sit on the river. There are several problems with these suggestions. First, and most important, is security. While it would not be wise to go into great detail about security threats in this report, those who work in the building will already be aware of the heightened security climate in which Parliament now operates, and there would be significant security challenges to overcome if a temporary building were to be placed in the middle of the river. Secondly is size. Figure 2 gives an indication of the footprint of the Palace, and the sheer size of the building in comparison to the river would be a real problem. To accommodate just the two Chambers and their essential services would require a temporary structure so large that it would need to take up virtually the whole width of the river alongside Parliament, severely impeding the passage of river traffic.

172. Thirdly, there are the issues of noise and nuisance which would be encountered in a temporary structure located right next to the construction site. Fourthly, it is likely that the river may need to be used to some extent in order to deliver materials and remove waste from the construction site, and any temporary Chambers on the river would impede that access. Finally, if the Palace and Victoria Tower Gardens are to become one large construction site, setting up a secure access route through the Palace to reach the river would be very complex and would be likely to disrupt the construction work. For these reasons, we also discounted the possibility of constructing temporary structures on the River Thames.

King Charles Street

173. Finally, one further scenario which we have considered in some depth is the option of constructing a temporary Chamber in King Charles Street, off Whitehall between the Treasury Building and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office building. This option would be sub-optimal in a number of ways, especially as it would probably necessitate the closure of that road, but we mention it here for the purpose of completeness. We further note that, if either of our preferred options for temporary accommodation turned out not to be feasible, then this scenario might need to be considered further.

¹⁰⁰ The area of the current House of Commons Chamber is 278 square metres and the current House of Lords Chamber is 366 square metres. Information provided by the Parliamentary Estates Directorate.

Government property

174. A more promising source of accommodation lies within the Government estate, not least because, as these buildings are already in public ownership, there would be minimal net cost to the taxpayer in acquiring them. In addition, the Government is focusing on reducing its estate, particularly in central London.¹⁰¹ Lord Butler of Brockwell told us that, while individual Government departments might be defensive of the buildings they owned, the Government had an obligation “to seek a satisfactory solution to enable Parliament to work effectively” during the R&R Programme, in the interests of the UK as a whole.¹⁰²

175. Over the past few months, the R&R Programme Team has been working with the Government Property Unit to identify options for a temporary move to the Government estate. We note that discussions with the Government Property Unit have only taken place on an exploratory basis so far, and that no detailed negotiations have taken place or assurances been given. Furthermore, we recognise that even identifying some of these buildings in this report may cause uncertainty and concern to the current occupants of those buildings. We reiterate, therefore, that each of the possible options for temporary accommodation still needs to be assessed and refined in a lot more detail, so it is not possible at this stage to make a definite recommendation as to where either House of Parliament should be located. We are grateful, nonetheless, for all the advice and support that the Government Property Unit has provided to the Programme Team.

176. The most promising options identified so far are below. While we stress again that no detailed designs have yet been produced, initial studies have indicated that adapting pre-existing buildings is likely to be cheaper, and more likely to provide a lasting legacy, than constructing new temporary buildings which would be lost at the end of the Programme. We have therefore focussed our attention on Government buildings close to the current Palace which have the potential to accommodate a Chamber and other offices.

The House of Commons: Northern Estate and Richmond House

177. As part of its long term property consolidation strategy, the House of Commons has been in discussions with the Government to acquire Richmond House, currently occupied by the Department of Health. This building abuts directly onto Parliament’s Northern Estate¹⁰³ and so would provide an ideal location for a temporary House of Commons. If acquired, the use of Richmond House during the R&R Programme would have several benefits.

178. The secure perimeter of the Parliamentary Estate could be extended to encompass Richmond House and its surrounding spaces. Given that over 200 MPs already have offices in the Northern Estate,¹⁰⁴ this would make an ideal location for a temporary House of Commons Chamber, with direct access from MPs’ current offices on the Northern Estate.

179. Initial investigations of the building have indicated that it should be possible to construct a temporary Chamber in the courtyard of Richmond House. The rest of the

¹⁰¹ [Government’s Estate Strategy](#), Cabinet Office (October 2014)

¹⁰² [Q 37](#)

¹⁰³ The Northern Estate is the cluster of buildings to the north and west of Portcullis House, which mostly house MPs’ offices: Norman Shaw North, Norman Shaw South, Derby Gate, Canon Row and 1 Parliament Street.

¹⁰⁴ Information provided by the Parliamentary Estates Directorate.

building could then be used to house a mixture of Members' offices (for those displaced from the Palace), meeting rooms and those services which need to be located close to the Chamber. Additional space would be required for House of Commons committee rooms, but there are places within the Northern Estate where these could be located.

180. The total space available to the House would be less than at present, and it might be necessary to acquire an additional building to accommodate all Members' offices. However, there is one further and very important potential benefit to the taxpayer. On the assumption that Richmond House would be retained by the House of Commons after the R&R Programme, there would be the potential for this building to provide a lasting legacy as part of a rationalised Parliamentary Estate. It might also allow the House of Commons to dispose of one or more of the buildings it is currently leasing, delivering long-term cost savings.

181. It goes without saying that alternative accommodation would also have to be found for the Department of Health. While this is primarily a matter for the Government, we note that there could be potential for the Department to occupy another building currently leased by the House of Commons, in exchange for Richmond House.

The House of Lords: Queen Elizabeth II Conference Centre

182. If a full decant of the Palace of Westminster is to take place then it is imperative that adequate and comparable temporary accommodation is found for both Houses. Throughout our inquiry we have therefore placed equal weight on finding a solution for both Houses, and on identifying locations for temporary accommodation which will enable both Houses to be located as close to each other as possible.

183. After considering various options, on the basis of the initial feasibility work conducted so far, it appears to us that the Queen Elizabeth II Conference Centre would provide the best possible temporary accommodation for the House of Lords. The Queen Elizabeth II Conference Centre is owned by the Government and currently used as a commercial conferencing facility. One of the main factors in its favour is that it already contains many large open spaces, which could provide an ideal location for the House of Lords Chamber. It would also satisfy our requirement for co-location of the two Houses. If the House of Commons were to be based temporarily in and around the Northern Estate, the Queen Elizabeth II Conference Centre would be just a short walk across Parliament Square.

184. As for office space, adaptations could be made in order to create space for essential services which need to be located close to the Chamber and for some Members' offices. As with the House of Commons option, the total space available might be less than at present, but the building should be able to accommodate all of the essential services required near the Chamber, and would be less than a 10 minute walk away from current House of Lords buildings. It is possible that additional office space might be required in another building nearby in order to accommodate enough offices close to the temporary Chamber for use by Members and staff for whom remaining in their offices in the Southern Estate would not be possible or practicable.

185. We recognise that there would be commercial implications arising from the occupation of the Queen Elizabeth II Conference Centre, as it would mean the loss of a conference facility in the centre of London and the loss of revenue currently generated

from that business. We have received submissions of written evidence on this matter from the Management Board of the Queen Elizabeth II Conference Centre and from Mr Simon Hughes, a non-executive director of the Centre. At their request, their submissions have not been published for reasons of commercial confidentiality. However, we have taken their concerns into consideration and note that the Government or the Mayor of London might need to give further consideration to the provision of conference facilities in central London if this option were to be taken forward.

Additional office space

186. The preferred options for temporary accommodation for both the House of Commons and the House of Lords are only likely to work if some additional office space can be acquired in order to provide enough room for Members of both Houses to work effectively. Initial discussions with the Government Property Unit have indicated that there may be an opportunity, by the time the R&R Programme begins, to make use of some of the space currently occupied by Government departments in the Treasury Building (100 Parliament Street). These discussions are still underway. Other options could include buying or leasing other properties in the area, but this is a matter which will need to be considered in more detail by the Delivery Authority once established. The acquisition of any additional office space will also have to be subject to a rigorous business case.

Progressing the options for temporary accommodation

187. As with the recommended delivery option, following Parliament's approval on the preferred way forward for the R&R Programme, much more work will need to be carried out in order to secure temporary accommodation for both Houses. This will need to involve a thorough examination of the needs of both Houses while in temporary accommodation, a clear determination that the decant options meet these needs, as well as negotiations on the acquisition and fit-out of the buildings. Each decant scenario will also need to be rigorously assessed in terms of its security. Once established, this work will be undertaken by the Delivery Authority, and it will be for that body to validate the options selected by this Committee. If the Delivery Authority identifies problems with the options we have recommended, or is able to identify better solutions, it should be open to that body to suggest alternatives if necessary. However, we believe that the options outlined above are the most promising scenarios which merit further consideration.

188. Our recommendation for a full decant of the Palace of Westminster is contingent on suitable temporary accommodation being procured for both Houses. As far as possible, the solutions for temporary accommodation should enable the continued effective use of existing Parliamentary buildings, in order to minimise cost and disruption. When planning for decant, we recommend that the administrations of the two Houses should work together in order to ensure that the best use is made of existing Parliamentary buildings, including the sharing of buildings between the two Houses if required.

189. The House of Commons already owns a number of buildings within the Northern Estate, and many MPs' offices are located in those buildings. Subject to further feasibility work, value-for-money assessments and validation by the Sponsor Board and Delivery Authority, we conclude that the best decant solution for the House of

Commons appears to be a solution based around Richmond House and the Northern Estate.

190. For the House of Lords, subject to further feasibility work, value-for-money assessments and validation by the Sponsor Board and Delivery Authority, we conclude that the best decant solution appears to be the establishment of a temporary Chamber and supporting offices in the Queen Elizabeth II Conference Centre.

191. For both Houses, it would be desirable for Members' offices to be located as close to the temporary Chambers as possible, either within the same building, or very close by. In order to facilitate this, we recommend that the R&R Programme Team and, when established, the Sponsor Board and Delivery Authority, should continue to work with the Government Property Unit in order to identify space within the Government Estate, such as the Treasury building, which could be used for additional Members' offices and other services.

192. For both Houses, it will be vital to ensure that necessary provisions are made for the essential staff and offices which need to be located close to the Chambers. In contrast, during the period of the works, some services could be scaled back or provided differently in order to reduce the amount of temporary accommodation required and the cost of the Programme. The Programme Team is in the process of assessing the functions and services which need to be located close to the Chambers, and we recommend that Member and staff consultation should be factored into this ongoing work as a key priority.

193. For both Houses, the temporary decant solution should be designed and constructed with legacy value in mind. Wherever possible, we recommend that the temporary provisions made for Chambers, Member and staff offices during the period of the works should be designed with a view to reusing or repurposing those buildings after the Restoration and Renewal Programme in a way which ensures best value for money for the taxpayer.

Next steps for temporary accommodation

194. Over the coming months, the Programme Team will need to continue their work to establish the feasibility of each of the options for temporary accommodation. This work will pass to the Delivery Authority, once it is established, to take forward, and it will be for that body ultimately to make recommendations on the best and most feasible options for temporary accommodation. Once the Delivery Authority is formed, the next steps for this work will include the following:

- Conducting space studies across both Houses to accurately determine the requirements for space in temporary accommodation, with a view to reducing the requirement in temporary accommodation for little-used services and maximising space for Members' offices.
- Assessing where staff of both Houses could be relocated within the Parliamentary Estate.
- Initiating more formal engagement with relevant landlords in order to investigate the potential use or acquisition of particular properties.

- Beginning engagement with planning authorities and other stakeholders on proposed works.
- Producing an Outline Business Case for acquisition of the preferred decant scenarios and developing a design brief for temporary accommodation buildings.

195. **The development of temporary accommodation for both Houses will require further feasibility work and detailed analysis. Although this work will be started by Parliamentary officials, it will be completed by the Delivery Authority once established. It is essential that Members and staff be involved and consulted throughout this process in order to ensure that the temporary accommodation adequately meets the needs and requirements of the users of those buildings, as well as being cost-effective. In order to guide the development of temporary accommodation options as part of the next phase of the Programme, we recommend a number of criteria for temporary accommodation, outlined in Box 2.**

196. **We recommend that the final plans for temporary accommodation be drawn up by the Delivery Authority, for approval by the Sponsor Board and, ultimately, by both Houses. The Delivery Authority and the Sponsor Board, working together, will have to ensure that the temporary accommodation fully meets the needs of Members of both Houses and also represents good value for money, having regard to its use during the R&R Programme and to any possible legacy use afterwards.**

Box 2: Recommended Criteria for Temporary Accommodation

In order to guide the feasibility work which will need to be undertaken on potential sites for temporary accommodation, we recommend the following Criteria for Temporary Accommodation:

Value for money

- One of the overarching criteria for the development of temporary accommodation should be value for money. The main purpose of the Programme is to restore and renew the Palace of Westminster, and that is where resources and effort should be focused. While suitable temporary accommodation will need to be developed for both Houses, the costs and work required to provide this accommodation should be minimised as far as possible.
- A minimum level of reconfiguration and fit-out of the temporary buildings should be carried out, except where it is essential for business need, security, building regulations or accessibility reasons.

Location

- The two Houses should be located as close to each other as possible, and also situated as close to the current Parliamentary buildings and Whitehall as is feasible.

Fit-out

- The general floor space and layout of the two Chambers should be replicated as far as possible in temporary accommodation. However, the fixtures and fittings do not need to be as elaborate as the current Chambers and should be designed in a way which minimises unnecessary cost.

- The division lobbies should, as far as possible, be replicated. However, if necessary to fit into temporary accommodation, consideration should be given to configuring the division lobbies differently.
- Committee rooms for both Houses do not necessarily need to be located within the same building as the Chambers, as long as they are close enough to enable Members to attend votes in either House.
- There should be flexibility in the design and layout of committee rooms in temporary accommodation. In particular, consideration should be given to reducing the size of committee rooms in order to reduce the total floor area required.
- All temporary accommodation should be designed with accessibility in mind, and make suitable provision for Members, staff and visitors with a disability.
- Car parking and drop-off spaces should be provided close to temporary accommodation for those with a mobility impairment. Short-term parking should also be provided for Members who need to access the Chamber quickly (for divisions, as an example). However, car parking space for all Members and staff need not be provided.

Working environment

- House of Commons temporary accommodation should provide the same number of desks for Members as currently provided in the Palace. Where possible, cellular, private offices should be provided for Members of the House of Commons, though they need not all be in the same building as the temporary Chamber. If necessary in order to fit into the temporary accommodation, thought should be given to accommodating some Members in shared offices.
- As far as possible, House of Lords temporary accommodation should provide the same number of Members' desks as currently provided in the Palace. However, if there are space constraints, thought should be given to reducing the number of allocated desks in the temporary accommodation and to providing flexible, shared working areas for Members of the House of Lords near the Chamber instead. Allocated desks should continue to be provided in other current Parliamentary buildings.
- Flexible workspace should be provided for Members of both Houses close to the Chambers.
- Temporary accommodation does not need to contain the same number of ministerial offices and ministerial meeting rooms as currently contained in the Palace.
- Staff who are required to be close to one of the Chambers should be accommodated in the same building as that Chamber, while others should be located in nearby buildings.
- Staff of MPs should be accommodated with the Members they support in temporary accommodation.
- Staff of Members of the House of Lords should be accommodated close to the Members they support but, as now, should not be accommodated in Members' shared offices.

- Use of Parliamentary buildings, by both Members and staff, should be intensified wherever possible in order to accommodate more people before additional accommodation is sought.
- Both Houses should accept an element of compromise while occupying temporary accommodation. This might involve certain services or facilities not being replicated in temporary accommodation.
- Some of the facilities which need not be replicated in full include:
 - Areas which have only a ceremonial function
 - Banqueting facilities (though basic cafeterias and dining rooms will be required for Members and staff)
 - Car parking (although some car parking will be required for those with a mobility impairment, and for Members needing to access either Chamber quickly)
 - Exhibition spaces
 - Library spaces (though some level of reduced Library service will be required close to both Chambers)
 - Retail spaces
 - Spaces occupied by third parties
- Further consultation should take place with Members and staff in order to determine which facilities and services need to be replicated in temporary accommodation, and which should be scaled back.

Security

- Temporary accommodation options for both Houses should be developed in line with current security advice and guidance from the Parliamentary Security Director.

Access to the work of both Houses

- Temporary accommodation for both Houses should be designed so as to allow continued public access to the Chambers and committees of both Houses, as well as space for members of the public to meet their elected representatives.
- Temporary accommodation for both Houses should also be designed so as to enable continued access for the press. In particular, facilities will need to be provided for members of the press close to the Chambers and committee rooms.

Legacy potential

- As far as possible, temporary accommodation provided for the purposes of the R&R Programme should be designed with legacy value in mind.

4 Scope of the Programme

The extent of the Programme

197. As outlined in Chapter 2, the fundamental driver for the Restoration and Renewal Programme is the essential work required to the M&E services. It is the large scale of these works, and the complex interdependencies between the various systems, which means that the work now needs to be tackled as one comprehensive, strategic programme, rather than by routine, piecemeal maintenance.

198. In order to undertake a large, full-scale restoration and renewal of the essential services which allow the building to function, significant intrusive works will be required around the Palace. This is because, while the largest and most obvious parts of the M&E services are located in the basements, they are not wholly contained there. Every service in the basement supplies a network which runs throughout the entire building, supplying every room in the Palace. To give just one example, it would be no use replacing antiquated electricity cables in the basement if the wires which connected them to the lights and power sockets in offices were still 50 years old.

199. This means that a comprehensive programme to address the M&E problem will also require access to virtually every cable, pipe and wire which is secreted underneath floorboards, buried in wall cavities, or hidden within ceiling voids. This will mean disturbing or removing many heritage surfaces in the building—lifting floorboards, stripping wallpaper and removing plaster, taking down wall and ceiling panels. In this context, it would be a dereliction to overlook the essential conservation work which is required to preserve much of that heritage fabric.

200. In Chapter 2 we outlined the asbestos problem which will need to be tackled alongside the M&E works, as well as fire compartmentation works which could be carried out at the same time. A final area which will also need to be addressed as part of a basic programme of works is that of accessibility. The regulatory framework covering historic buildings is complex but, broadly speaking, there is a requirement on the proprietors of listed buildings to balance the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 with the various requirements relating to planning and conservation.¹⁰⁵ Whatever the regulatory requirements, it is clear to us that access to the Palace for many Members, staff and visitors with disabilities is very difficult indeed, something we consider in more detail in paragraphs 220 to 223. We do not believe that it would be possible for Parliament to justify a renovation programme of this scale that did not also deliver significant improvements to access for people with disabilities.

201. The basic extent of the R&R Programme therefore covers:

- a) the replacement of the outdated M&E plant, which is the immediate and pressing driver for the R&R Programme;
- b) essential conservation work to the heritage fabric of the building, since much of that fabric will in any case be disturbed by the M&E work;
- c) an extensive programme of asbestos removal, which will be necessary to allow full access to the M&E systems;

¹⁰⁵ See Historic England's guidance, [Easy Access to Historic Buildings](#) (June 2015)

- d) the introduction of full fire compartmentation, which will only be possible as existing M&E systems are rationalised and re-fitted, with redundant plant and asbestos removed; and
- e) an element of work to improve access to the building for people with disabilities.

202. The question which then arises is: what other works should be included in the Programme? If Parliament is to spend a significant amount of money in order to restore the essential services within the building, and to face the significant disruption that this will inevitably involve, should the opportunity also be taken to do other works to improve and to future-proof the building?

203. We received a range of views on this subject. In the context of the current economic climate, some people urged us to ensure that the Programme would be restricted to its bare essentials. During our informal consultations, Members of both Houses cautioned against spending large sums of money on improvements to the building unless they were absolutely necessary.

204. However, many other witnesses urged us to take a wider view. The Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) said that:

“Conserving and safeguarding the heritage of the Palace of Westminster will need to go beyond simply preserving the historic fabric. It should be a forward looking process that keeps the buildings operational and useful for at least the next generation, without compromising its cultural assets.”¹⁰⁶

The Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS) also supported this approach, noting that:

“the restoration and renewal project offers a rare chance to dramatically improve the working environment of our legislature and address the myriad problems currently hindering public engagement with the building.”¹⁰⁷

Outcome levels in the Independent Options Appraisal

205. The IOA considered three notional outcome levels, which were developed in order to allow a high-level comparison of the extent of the works which could be carried out within the Palace, and their potential costs and benefits. No detailed specifications have yet been produced for the R&R Programme so, while illustrative examples of potential works were mentioned in the IOA, the outcome levels did not include a prescriptive list of works which would definitely be undertaken as part of each scenario.

206. Furthermore, the outcome levels costed in the IOA were calculated using high-level comparative information, rather than by costing itemised pieces of work. The figures included in the report were *not*, therefore, budgets for the Programme, and the overall cost of the Programme will depend on the design and specification for each area of work, as well as on the delivery option and Programme length.

¹⁰⁶ Written evidence from the Royal Institute of British Architects ([RAR0035](#))

¹⁰⁷ Written evidence from the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors ([RAR0052](#))

207. However, the analysis contained within the IOA did allow a comparison of the orders of magnitude of cost associated with different notional outcome levels. The IOA's clear conclusion was that:

“The differences between the Outcome Levels are relatively modest and there is little difference in the overall cost and schedule for delivering each. The scope of work to be delivered under Outcome Level A represents the majority of all work to be completed within the Programme.”¹⁰⁸

In other words, delivering more ambitious outcome levels will not cost substantially more, as a percentage of the total Programme cost, than delivering the minimum outcome.

208. It is clear, therefore, that when it comes to the scope of the Programme the main driver of the costs is the essential work required to the M&E services and the associated work contained within Outcome Level A. While there are ways in which the cost of the Programme can be significantly reduced, these relate more to *how* the works are conducted, rather than to *what* works are carried out.¹⁰⁹

209. Below we outline some of the issues which witnesses have suggested could be addressed at the same time as the essential M&E works. It is not possible to categorise these works easily into Outcome Levels A, B or C, and so we have examined them as general themes of work which could, depending on how they were addressed, be considered as going beyond the ‘do minimum’ approach.

Opportunities to improve the Palace of Westminster

210. “We shape our buildings and afterwards our buildings shape us.”¹¹⁰ These words are still as true now as when Sir Winston Churchill first uttered them in the debate on how to rebuild the House of Commons Chamber during the Second World War. The design and layout of a building can seriously affect the way in which people move around it, work within it and use its facilities.

211. The current Palace of Westminster has built up in a piecemeal fashion. In 1902, 28% of the building was residential and domestic space, compared to 5% used as office space. By 2013, various parts of the building had been adapted and modified to accommodate an increasingly busy Parliament, and the use of the Palace of Westminster had altered so that 26% was devoted to office space, and 6% as residential and domestic accommodation.¹¹¹ These changes have taken place gradually, with no overall strategy. Alongside this, the number of people within the Palace of Westminster has increased dramatically over the past century. In addition to the Members of both Houses, there is a permanent staff of more than 2,000 in the House of Commons¹¹² and approximately 500 in the House of Lords working on the Parliamentary Estate.¹¹³ Added to these are Members’ staff in both Houses and third-party employees, such as contractors, police officers and Royal

108 Deloitte LLP, [Palace of Westminster Restoration and Renewal Programme Independent Options Appraisal](#), September 2014, Volume 1, p 46

109 *Ibid.*, p 10

110 HC Deb, 28 October 1943, [col 403](#)

111 Information provided by the Restoration and Renewal Programme Team.

112 [House of Commons Commission Annual Report 2014–15](#) (HC 341, Session 2015–16), p 42. Figures for the House of Commons include staff of the Parliamentary Digital Service and the Parliamentary Estates Directorate, which serve both Houses.

113 [House of Lords Annual Report 2014–15](#) (HL Paper 23, Session 2015–16), p 65

Mail staff. While not all of these people have offices within the Palace of Westminster, the number of people working in and moving around the building, including around 1 million visitors a year, is huge compared to the number of people that would have been using it when originally built.

Table 6: Use of space in the Palace of Westminster over time

Use of space in the Palace of Westminster	1902 (percentage of total)	2013 (percentage of total)
Office space	5%	26%
Residential and domestic services	28%	6%
Catering	9%	16%
Storage	27%	19%
Ceremonial	18%	14%
Committee and meeting space	7%	10%
Social	2%	5%
Library	4%	4%

Source: Information provided by the Restoration and Renewal Programme Team. The total net area in 1902 was different to that in 2013, so is not directly comparable. Figures are based on the best information available for each year and the percentages show the relative changes in use.

212. While the Palace of Westminster has evolved over time to meet these various demands, there is a general sense that the building has not been able to keep up with the rate of change in its use. Some adaptations have been made in order to assist people with mobility impairments, but these changes have generally been made incrementally rather than developed as part of an overall strategy. New technologies have been installed in a piecemeal fashion—such as steam heating, mechanical ventilation, telephones, electricity, broadcasting and data networks—and these have all been retrofitted into a Victorian building which was never designed to accommodate this kind of infrastructure. Furthermore, as the security climate has changed over recent decades, the building has had to adapt to accommodate new facilities such as security search-points, CCTV, automated access systems and stand-off barriers. While these facilities are essential to protect the safety of those who visit and work in the building, they have led to significant changes in the way people move around the building, one of the most striking examples being the closure to the public of St Stephen’s Entrance.

213. Through our Call for Evidence, and in our evidence sessions, we asked witnesses for their views on the opportunities that the Programme might provide in order to adapt the building and to improve the way in which people can move around and work within it. The list of possible improvements which could be made to the building is almost limitless, but below are some of the main themes highlighted in the evidence.

Public access and visitor facilities

214. One of the common themes throughout the evidence we received was that the building is not well designed or adapted for visitors. The Palace of Westminster welcomes over 1 million visitors a year, who come for a wide variety of reasons:¹¹⁴

- attending committee meetings, either to give evidence or to watch proceedings;
- for business reasons, such as officials attending debates or participating in meetings (*circa* 3,000-4,000 per day);
- to see debates in the Chambers from the public galleries (*circa* 140,000 per year);
- visitors on free democratic access tours (*circa* 120,000 per year);
- constituents and other guests invited by Members of both Houses;
- school groups (*circa* 100,000 per year);
- researchers and other visitors to the Parliamentary Archives (*circa* 2,000 per year);
- people attending exhibitions and public engagement events;
- Elizabeth Tower tour groups (*circa* 11,000 per year);
- commercial tour visitors (*circa* 200,000-220,000 per year);
- visiting Heads of State and Heads of Government, ambassadors, members of other Parliaments and other senior figures from around the world; and
- guests attending functions and events.

215. Improvement to public access has been one of Parliament’s most important achievements in recent years. However, the Parliamentary Visitors Group noted that public access “was not a central requirement of the original building,” and that as Parliament has increasingly opened its doors and its proceedings, “the challenges of access, security, heritage and conservation, ongoing maintenance, and visitor flow have become acute.”¹¹⁵

216. The problems can begin before visitors even enter the building. Oonagh Gay, former Head of the Parliament and Constitution Centre in the House of Commons Library, told us that the Palace was not currently configured to be welcoming to the public. She commented that there were often “long queues for access at the busiest entrance points,” and suggested that any development of the Palace “should be able to separate out much more easily those visiting the Palace for heritage reasons from those who wish to see or participate in democracy in action.”¹¹⁶ Professor Jonathan Drori CBE, Chairman of the Speaker’s Advisory Council on Public Engagement, also pointed out some of the physical limitations with the building:

“Think about even the people who are invited to Parliament for semi-public events. These are the great and the good and you are asking them to stand

114 Written evidence from the Parliamentary Visitors Group ([RAR0059](#)) and information provided by the Parliamentary Archives.

115 Written evidence from the Parliamentary Visitors Group ([RAR0059](#))

116 Written evidence from Oonagh Gay ([RAR0020](#))

in the rain for 20 minutes or more, and often longer. What hope for the rest? Compare that with some other places such as the Scottish Parliament, for example, or the Bundestag in Germany, which feel a lot more welcoming.”¹¹⁷

217. Despite the best efforts of Members and staff in both Houses, there are also frustrations for visitors once they are in the building. On a practical level, these problems can include a lack of places to sit down, poor signage, and a lack of opportunities to participate.¹¹⁸ Others told us that public access to Parliament was not just about the physical building, but also the technological access too. Mr Geoff Mulgan, Chief Executive of NESTA, told us that it was “almost impossible” to conceive of either a decanted Parliament or a rebuilt Parliament “without the digital [access] being absolutely integral to how you think about every aspect of it.”¹¹⁹

218. We received various suggestions for how public access to the Palace of Westminster, and to the work of Parliament, might be improved, outlined in Box 3.

Box 3: How might access to Parliament be improved?

Though this is not intended to be an exhaustive list, below is a sample of the type of suggestions we received regarding how public access to the building and to the work of Parliament might be improved:

- Improve the welcome, signage, orientation and explanatory material around the Palace;
- Improve the management of secure access for different categories of visitor to Parliament;
- Create areas for the public to meet Members, engage with the business of both Houses (both in the Chambers and in committees), and to learn about Parliament;
- Establish a ‘viewing space’ for those visitors who do not want to watch proceedings for a long period of time, but who wish to spend a few minutes viewing business in either Chamber;
- Improve practical facilities for visitors, such as meeting spaces, lavatories, places to sit, cafés, bag storage, shops, private dining and events spaces;
- Create a one-way Visitor Route, with appropriate facilities along the Route, and modern interactive displays explaining how Parliament works, its history and the value of the Palace of Westminster;
- Rethink the way in which visitors move around the Palace and provide better ‘zoning’ of areas to demarcate public and private areas;
- Improve the facilities for people with disabilities;
- Create a permanent location for a new Education Centre;

117 [Q 39](#)

118 Written evidence from the Parliamentary Visitors Group ([RAR0059](#))

119 [Q 39](#)

- Increase the amount of space provided for displays and exhibitions; and
- Incorporate new digital technologies in order to allow members of the public to engage with Parliamentary proceedings remotely.

Source: Written evidence from the Parliamentary Visitors Group ([RAR0059](#)), written evidence from the Royal Institute of British Architects ([RAR0035](#)), oral evidence from Mr Mulgan ([QQ 39, 45](#)), oral evidence from Ms Penny Young, Chair of the Parliamentary Visitors Group ([Q 41](#)).

219. Each of the suggestions in Box 3 is likely to have its own advantages and disadvantages, and all would need to be subjected to a rigorous value-for-money assessment. We have not, therefore, attempted to scrutinise any of the proposals in detail at this stage. However, it is clear that if a large programme of work is to be carried out within the Palace, then it would also provide the opportunity to improve facilities for the 1 million visitors a year who visit the building. The message from the Parliamentary Visitors Group was that:

“Major construction work has to be undertaken on the Palace of Westminster, which also presents a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to rethink the layout and significantly improve both physical access, security and facilities in the Palace, and also public engagement with Parliament. This will help improve the return on investment of the works, and provide a lasting legacy for the public.”¹²⁰

Accessibility

220. The lack of facilities for mobility-impaired and other disabled people was another major theme throughout the evidence we received, and an issue which affected Members, staff and visitors to the building. For Members, problems began in the Chambers of the two Houses, where physical access is limited due to the fixed layout, steps and lack of wheelchair space. Baroness Thomas of Winchester, a member of ParliAble¹²¹ and an officer of the All-Party Parliamentary Group for Disability, told us that in the House of Lords Chamber:

“It is possible to get four wheelchair/mobility scooter users in the space behind the Clerks and in front of the crossbench, but only just, and if the crossbench is full, then there is no room for manoeuvre ... Ideally we would like to sit near our party groups, but this would only be possible with some redesigning of the furniture in the Chamber.”¹²²

221. Professor Sarah Childs, Professor of Politics and Gender at the University of Bristol, drew attention to the unequal provision of seating within the House of Commons, which prevented those with a physical disability being able to take part in proceedings in the same way as other Members. She argued that “Members using wheelchairs should be able to sit with their party colleagues on the backbenches, and if appointed to the frontbenches to sit with the Cabinet and Government.”¹²³ Other serious problems identified by witnesses include the lack, and inappropriate placement, of lifts throughout the building, heavy doors which are difficult to open, and the lack of accessible lavatories.¹²⁴ Furthermore,

¹²⁰ Written evidence from the Parliamentary Visitors Group ([RAR0059](#))

¹²¹ ParliAble is a workplace equality network in support of disabled people in Parliament.

¹²² Written evidence from Baroness Thomas of Winchester MBE ([RAR0056](#))

¹²³ Written evidence from Professor Sarah Childs ([RAR0031](#))

¹²⁴ Written evidence from Baroness Thomas of Winchester MBE ([RAR0056](#)) and Professor Sarah Childs ([RAR0031](#))

Baroness Thomas told us that there were some “easy adjustments” which could be made to lavatories in order to make them more suitable for those with mobility impairments, which need not be costly.¹²⁵

222. Accessibility issues concern more than just physical access though. Baroness Thomas of Winchester noted that there was no sound reinforcement in the House of Lords Chamber where wheelchair users sit, as there is for other Members.¹²⁶ This is an important point, as noise levels and poor acoustics in both Chambers mean that even Members with acute hearing rely on the Chamber sound system to follow proceedings. In addition to the Chambers, there might also be scope to further improve the sound systems in the committee rooms and other areas of the Palace to provide a better experience for those with a hearing impairment.¹²⁷ Finally, the Chambers and other areas of the Palace can also be difficult to navigate for those with a sight impairment.

223. The Trade Union Side, representing staff in the House of Commons, told us that resources should be focussed on “ensuring that Parliament as a future employer can welcome people of all abilities” and that the R&R Programme “must ensure that all reasonable adjustments—as an absolute minimum—be made so as to allow disabled staff to carry out roles across the House.”¹²⁸ The Parliamentary Visitors Group told us that the R&R Programme “presents a real opportunity to provide a more open, inclusive and accessible Parliament, including full disabled access throughout the Palace.”¹²⁹

Facilities for the media

224. Accessibility is not just about the physical adaptations to the building; it is also about ensuring that the work of both Houses is easily accessible and communicated to members of the public. The media obviously play a large role in communicating the work of Parliament to the wider world, and it will be important to ensure that adequate provision is made for the media when both Houses return to the building after the works.

225. In addition to giving oral evidence, members of the Parliamentary Press Gallery gave some Members of the Committee tours around their offices in the House of Commons. From our conversations with journalists we encountered during those tours, it became apparent that one of the most important factors for them was proximity to the Chambers. We were told that it is extremely important for journalists to be able to access the Commons Chamber and all committee rooms quickly. Furthermore, members of the Press Association maintain a constant presence in the House of Lords Chamber, so also need continual access to that. Apart from the formal spaces, members of the press also valued informal ‘huddle’ spaces where they could gather quickly to speak to Government officials and spokespeople after an important debate. Their main message was that for effective scrutiny and reporting it was important for journalists to be located within the heart of the building where they could interact regularly with Members of both Houses.

226. While the facilities in the current Press Gallery were generally viewed to be good, there was scope for improvements to be made. One of the major areas of concern was the

125 Written evidence from Baroness Thomas of Winchester MBE ([RAR0056](#))

126 Written evidence from Baroness Thomas of Winchester MBE ([RAR0056](#)). We also received written evidence from Baroness Nicholson of Winterbourne on audio provision in the House of Lords ([RAR0029](#)).

127 Written evidence from Baroness Nicholson of Winterbourne ([RAR0029](#))

128 Written evidence from the Trade Union Side, House of Commons ([RAR0023](#))

129 Written evidence from the Parliamentary Visitors Group ([RAR0059](#))

lack of facilities for members of the media with a disability. In oral evidence, Mr Tony Grew, Honorary Secretary of the Parliamentary Press Gallery, told us that no part of the Press Gallery was accessible to somebody in a wheelchair, a fact which he felt was “an outrage in 2016.”¹³⁰ There was also scope to improve the technology available within the Press Gallery’s offices, particularly the wi-fi and mobile phone coverage.¹³¹

227. Members of the Press Gallery were also keen to stress to us the importance of individual offices. Currently, most journalists in the Press Gallery occupy large shared offices, with many different news agencies often operating within one room. The journalists we spoke to indicated that this generally worked fairly well, and that it depended on trust between colleagues in the same room. However, they stressed that it was important to have some walls, and that they would not wish to lose the provision of office space when they returned to the Palace of Westminster. In Mr Grew’s view, a large media centre which put all the media into one large room, without also providing separate offices, “would be detrimental to the way in which the Gallery operates”.¹³²

228. At this stage in the Programme, it is too early to make suggestions on the designs for the refurbished Palace of Westminster, or to recommend particular criteria for specific offices. However, the press are one of the most important channels of communication between Parliament and the public, and it is vital that adequate facilities are present in the Palace of Westminster in order to allow Parliamentary reporting to continue. We therefore note that it will be important to ensure that the concerns of the Parliamentary Press Gallery are taken into account as the plans for the Programme are developed, so that members of the Press Gallery can feed in their suggestions for the development of facilities for the media.

Conservation

229. From a conservation perspective, the Palace is in a vulnerable state. Despite efforts by the Parliamentary Estates Directorate to maintain the Palace, its decoration and interiors, there are still a number of conservation concerns, in terms of both dilapidation and inappropriate treatment. Examples of this dilapidation include part of the ceiling falling down in the House of Lords Chamber in 1980, small pieces of timber falling from the roof of Westminster Hall several times a year, or stonework becoming loose, stained or crumbled. A brief walk around the building will also provide tangible evidence of water penetration in almost every part of it.¹³³ A continuing programme to replace the cast iron roofs around the Palace is intended to prevent further water penetration into the building, but the damage and corrosion already caused to stonework, timber and metal from permeating rainwater will take much longer to fix.

230. Many parts of the Palace are in a shabby condition, “reflecting their age and the high level of wear and tear caused by intensive use.”¹³⁴ A number of important conservation works required throughout the Palace cannot be effectively tackled while Parliament is in occupation, even during the long summer recesses. One such example is the 18 statues of the ‘Magna Carta barons’ which are situated at a high level in the House of Lords

130 [Q 16](#)

131 [Q 2](#)

132 [Q 5](#)

133 [Restoration and Renewal of the Palace of Westminster: Pre-Feasibility Study and Preliminary Strategic Business Case](#), October 2012, p 22

134 *Ibid.*, p 22

Chamber. Four of the statues sit above the public gallery and can be reached relatively easily, allowing regular cleaning. However, the other 14 are much more difficult to access and, as a result, are now coated in a thick layer of dust. Furthermore, a study of two of the statues in 2000 showed that the statues also suffer from corrosion and decay. While those two statues were conserved at the time, ideally the others should all be subjected to high pressure water cleaning in order to remove the dust and old varnish, and then filled where necessary and repainted and varnished in order to preserve them. The only way to carry out this conservation work would be to remove the statues, requiring the erection of tall scaffolds on the stepped floor at either side of the Chamber. This would be very expensive, would need to be done during a recess in such a way that the Chamber could still be reinstated at short notice for a recall, and would disrupt visitor access.¹³⁵

231. An example such as this might seem trivial, but it typifies the way in which the very intensive use of the building presents a challenge even to routine conservation activity. There are numerous conservation tasks such as this which cannot be carried out around the normal work of Parliament and which are therefore indefinitely postponed. While these works would clearly not warrant a major programme of works in their own right, it would be very difficult to justify not including some of them as part of a larger renovation programme. As explained in Chapter 2, tackling the M&E services not only requires access to the basements, but also the cables, pipes and wires which serve every room in the Palace, whether they are underneath carpets, inside wood panelling, behind plasterwork or elsewhere. As with all major building works, there will be a significant element of ‘making good’ after these intrusive works, which means that a great deal of restoration of the damaged fabric of the building will be necessary.

232. Going beyond basic conservation works, if the scope of the R&R Programme were to be widened it could also provide an opportunity to restore the historical integrity of the Palace of Westminster. This could include opening up certain historic parts of the building which are currently inaccessible or poorly used; an example of this is shown in Box 4.

233. Finally, some 20th Century additions to the building, including the temporary cabin on the roof of Star Chamber Court, the flat roof on top of the Cloisters and the marquees on the Terrace, are not in keeping with the original building. Parliament could choose to use the R&R Programme as an opportunity to correct some of these anomalies.

Box 4: Cloister Court: a case study

Cloister Court is a little known and rarely seen gem hidden within the Palace of Westminster. Built in about 1520 by Henry VIII as part of the College of St Stephen, it is one of the few surviving medieval parts of the Palace, attached to the south-east side of Westminster Hall.

During the fire of 1834, Cloister Court sustained some damage, mostly to the southern half of its roof, but the basic structure and stonework were preserved. Its shape and design heavily influenced Charles Barry when designing the new Palace of Westminster. Barry decided to make a feature of the cloisters, designing the House of Commons entrance in such a way that MPs would enter the building at the side

¹³⁵ Information provided by the Parliamentary Estates Directorate and Written Answer by the Chairman of Committees (Lord Sewel), HL Deb, 3 July 2013, [col WA 224](#)

of the courtyard and then walk around the cloisters, with the ground floor acting as a cloakroom and one side of the upper storey acting as Members' Entrance to the Commons Lobby.

Bombing during the Second World War destroyed two sides of Cloister Court, which were restored after the war using some of the original stones and bosses. However, the stonework is now badly degraded and many areas have begun to crumble. The damage is caused by sulphation—a process whereby calcium carbonate in the stone reacts with sulphurous gases, often caused by pollution, and creates a black deposit on the stone—and by other pollution, weathering and general wear and tear. Furthermore, the foundations of the Court are fairly shallow and the current, non-porous paving does not allow proper surface-water drainage.

A programme of courtyard cleaning is currently underway and it is hoped that the stonework in Cloister Court will be cleaned before the R&R Programme begins. However, it will not address problems with accessibility to the courtyard. Currently, Cloister Court is enclosed on all sides by offices. This means that most Members and staff, let alone visitors, can never access Cloister Court, and would not know how to find it if they tried. This is a great pity, given its significant historic and architectural value.

If the scope of the R&R Programme were to be widened beyond the 'do minimum' approach, it could provide an opportunity to reopen the courtyard, integrating it into the rest of the building again. While detailed designs have not been worked up, possible options could include recreating an entrance through Members' Cloakroom in the House of Commons. If a more radical approach were adopted, and the flow of people moving around the building rethought, it might also be possible to include Cloister Court as part of the public Visitor Route, giving everybody a chance to enjoy the historic courtyard.

Figure 8: Cloister Court



Source: Information provided by the Parliamentary Estates Directorate

Working environment

234. As the use of the Palace of Westminster has evolved over time, various adaptations have been made to the building in an attempt to utilise the space in the best possible way. However, the evidence we received highlighted that the rate of change to facilities in the building had not kept pace with the changing working patterns and practices of Parliament, its Members and staff.

235. At peak periods, committee rooms are often oversubscribed, meaning that there are not enough rooms for Parliamentary purposes.¹³⁶ Both Houses currently operate a policy whereby select committee meetings can ‘bump’ meetings arranged by individual Members, and many Members have told us that this has often resulted in important meetings they are hosting having to be hastily rearranged or cancelled altogether. Aside from formal meeting rooms, there is also a lack of informal meeting space throughout the Palace where, for example, MPs can meet their constituents. Professor Childs suggested that, in a restored Palace of Westminster, meeting rooms should be designed with flexibility in mind so that they could easily be adapted for different uses. Such flexibility could perhaps include “the flexibility to rearrange furniture so as to make a space more intimate, less intimidating to those not used to attending and speaking in the House”.¹³⁷

236. Committee rooms could also be adapted in order to facilitate participation in Parliamentary proceedings. As an example, Professor Childs suggested that any renovation of the Palace should provide better technological facilities for Members, witnesses and visitors taking part in proceedings, such as “highest quality virtual participation; wi-fi; sufficient plugs for charging iPads, and laptops”.¹³⁸ Mr Mulgan also suggested that Parliament should be looking to the future when planning the R&R Programme, asking questions such as whether it should be possible, “when you are discussing fisheries policy, to beam in people from fishing communities across the country”, or to have data on display to aid the discussion. He told us that there were a vast array of technologies available which Parliament could make greater use of in order to encourage more public participation in Parliamentary proceedings.¹³⁹

237. The lack of informal meeting spaces for Members and the public could also be addressed as part of the R&R Programme. While Portcullis House has provided some informal meeting space which supports more modern ways of working, these kinds of facilities are lacking throughout the rest of the Estate. Professor Childs suggested that some more informal “café-like” space should be included in the Palace. She suggested that this could be provided for by glazing over courtyards, perhaps designing them as “flexible spaces that can be used in different ways at different times, e.g. cafés, reception areas, bookable private MP meeting spaces.”¹⁴⁰

Environmental performance

238. While significant improvements have been made to the environmental performance of the Palace in recent years, the R&R Programme could provide scope to build on these changes even further. In terms of the M&E services, the Pre-Feasibility Report

136 Written evidence from Andrew Makower ([RAR0014](#))

137 Written evidence from Professor Sarah Childs ([RAR0031](#))

138 *Ibid.*

139 [Q 42](#)

140 Written evidence from Professor Sarah Childs ([RAR0031](#))

highlighted the fact that improvements in energy efficiency would be made during the course of the medium-term M&E programme, by installing more modern pumps, sensors and controls in plant rooms. However, the full benefit of these improvements will only be felt as and when secondary services can be fully modernised as well. Poor insulation is also responsible for poor energy efficiency around windows and in roof spaces. The majority of windows in the Palace retain their original design, with a bespoke closing mechanism, which now allows significant infiltration of cold air in the winter and leakage of artificially cooled air in the summer.¹⁴¹ It is believed that none of the approximately 3,800 original, bronze-framed windows in the Palace now closes properly. Refurbishment of these windows would go a long way to reducing the building's carbon footprint and reducing energy bills.

239. Undertaking works to improve environmental performance in a Grade I listed building can be complex. Sealing the building to improve heating and cooling efficiency might increase the need for ventilation and humidity control, which might in turn reduce or negate the energy savings. A full programme of fabric improvements to reduce energy consumption would also have to be sensitive to heritage considerations and, because it would involve disruptive work in rooms and corridors, would therefore be best undertaken as part of a general refurbishment.¹⁴²

240. While improving the environmental performance of the building may be a complex task, many Members and staff have impressed on us the need to improve Parliament's performance in this area. The House of Commons Trade Union Side said that the House needed to look at "reducing to a minimum" the carbon footprint of a restored and renewed Palace of Westminster.¹⁴³

241. It is clear that the Palace of Westminster lags behind many other public buildings in terms of its standards of visitor facilities, accessibility, working environment and environmental performance. There is also a significant amount of conservation work which is required to the building, over and above simply making it watertight. While each of these issues could be addressed in part by adopting a 'bare minimum' approach to the R&R Programme, there is also significant scope to go further and to make real, significant changes to the way in which the building operates and how people function within it.

Proposed scope of the Programme

242. Throughout our inquiry, we have been extremely conscious of the need to ensure value for money for the taxpayer. However, the actual design briefs and specifications for the R&R Programme will not be developed until the next stage of the Programme, over the next few years, which means that precise costs for specific areas of work are not yet available. In due course, the Delivery Authority will need to take a view on the value for money which each of the areas of improvements might offer, which can then be factored into the final business case. At this stage, we have therefore taken a high-level view of the types of works which it would be sensible to conduct while a large-scale programme of renovation is taking place.

¹⁴¹ [Restoration and Renewal of the Palace of Westminster: Pre-Feasibility Study and Preliminary Strategic Business Case](#), October 2012, p 23

¹⁴² *Ibid.*, p 23

¹⁴³ Written evidence from the Trade Union Side, House of Commons ([RAR0023](#))

243. The view of the Chartered Institution of Building Services Engineers (CIBSE) was that:

“A parliamentary refurbishment is for life, or at least for a generation. The whole life of the project needs to be considered. In particular, whilst it may be tempting to economise on some aspects of the project to reduce costs, or the risk of a tabloid headline, it is a false economy”.¹⁴⁴

244. Alan Baxter Ltd, an engineering consultancy, also told us that:

“A major refurbishment of the Palace is an opportunity that we will not see again for at least another 100 years or so. Much has changed in the last one and a half centuries that could never have been envisaged by Barry or Pugin. The refurbishment works must incorporate the flexibility in its infrastructure to evolve with society and the needs of Parliament.”¹⁴⁵

245. In the current fiscal climate, we will need to be able to demonstrate that every penny spent on the Programme, over and above the bare minimum required to keep the building in a habitable condition, delivers a clear benefit to the nation. These benefits could be in the form of a more effective and efficient Parliament, better opportunities for people to engage with their elected representatives, improved public access to an important historic building, or reduced running costs associated with the building. Subject to value-for-money assessments, we also need to ensure that the building is ‘future-proofed’ so that there never needs to be another programme of this scale again.

246. Mr Grew from the Parliamentary Press Gallery recognised the dilemma faced by Parliament, noting that:

“You’re damned if you do and you’re damned if you don’t. You will face criticism from the press if you decide to spend money to refurbish the building for the 21st Century. Similarly, if it falls down, you will probably face even greater criticism. It is a political decision that will take with it the consequences that come with political decisions.”¹⁴⁶

In his opinion, if Parliament were only to conduct the bare minimum of works required, it would “be missing the biggest opportunity in a century to remake, reform and reshape the building to make it fit ... future proofing is the way to go.”¹⁴⁷

247. The Restoration and Renewal Programme represents a one-off opportunity to renew and transform the Palace of Westminster into a home fit for a 21st Century Parliament, while preserving the best aspects of its fine Victorian heritage. Future generations will not thank us if we fail to seize that opportunity, and instead preserve for posterity all the obstacles to public access and to the effective working of Parliament which the building currently embodies. We therefore conclude that it would be a mistake to miss this one-off opportunity, while essential works are being conducted to the Palace, to deliver other defined benefits as long as they offer excellent value for money at the same time. But nor should we spend taxpayers’ money on unnecessary embellishments and fripperies.

144 Written evidence from the Chartered Institution of Building Services Engineers ([RAR0063](#))

145 Written evidence from Alan Baxter Ltd ([RAR0055](#))

146 [Q 7](#)

147 [Q 24](#)

248. It is not possible at this stage to provide a definitive list of the types of work that might be included in the Programme and more detailed specifications will need to be drawn up by the Delivery Authority in due course. However, we recommend that the scope of works should be extended beyond the basic 'do minimum' option, given that the marginal cost of much of this work will be relatively low, and there is the scope to achieve significant economies of scale by incorporating it into the wider Programme.

249. A key test for all the design decisions for the Programme should be the delivery of value for money for the taxpayer. In the current fiscal climate, we will need to be able to demonstrate convincingly that every penny which is spent on the Programme, beyond the bare minimum which is needed to secure the future of the Palace of Westminster, delivers a clear benefit to the nation. The precise scope, quality and design of each area of work will need to be tested and considered in much greater detail as the Programme progresses, and then subjected to a rigorous business case. While we recommend that further works should be carried out in addition to the essential mechanical and electrical services, the cost of the Programme and potential value for money for the taxpayer will need to be considered and reviewed at every stage. The works should also be designed in order to equip Parliament for the future and to ensure that another programme of this scale is never required again.

250. Subject to rigorous value-for-money assessments being conducted by the Delivery Authority, we recommend that, as well as the minimum, essential level of work required under the Restoration and Renewal Programme, both Houses should agree in principle to include in the scope of the Restoration and Renewal Programme additional improvements to the building.

Proposed Objectives and Guiding Principles

251. For the purposes of the IOA, the R&R Programme Board agreed a number of objectives for the R&R Programme.¹⁴⁸ As part of the next stage of the R&R Programme, strategic briefs will need to be assimilated by architects and engineers and detailed designs for the building will then be developed. In order to guide this process a clear steer on Parliament's requirements will be needed and, while the objectives outlined above were suitable for the initial phase of the Programme, some more detailed guidance will be required for the design stage. In conjunction with the Programme Team, we have therefore developed some proposed Objectives and Guiding Principles for the scope of the Programme (outlined in Box 5). These will inevitably need to be refined further over time, and in consultation with Members and staff in both Houses, but we believe that the themes outlined in the Objectives and Guiding Principles should be the main areas of focus for the R&R Programme.

252. In order to guide the development of the brief for the Restoration and Renewal Programme, we recommend a series of Objectives and Guiding Principles for the R&R Programme, set out in Box 5.

¹⁴⁸ Deloitte LLP, [Palace of Westminster Restoration and Renewal Programme Independent Options Appraisal](#), September 2014, Volume 1, p 4

Box 5: Recommended Objectives and Guiding Principles for the Scope of the Restoration and Renewal Programme

Objectives

In order to guide the development of the brief for the Restoration and Renewal Programme, we recommend the following Objectives for the Scope of the Restoration and Renewal Programme.

The Restoration and Renewal Programme must:

- A: Deliver value for money for the taxpayer
- B: Reduce Parliament's operational risk
- C: Meet the needs of a 21st Century Parliament for (i) the public and (ii) Parliamentarians
- D: Protect the iconic and national heritage of the Palace of Westminster
- E: Ensure the security of Parliament

Guiding Principles

In order to fulfil these Objectives, we also recommend the following Guiding Principles.

A: To deliver value for money for the taxpayer

- R&R will enable mechanical and electrical infrastructure in the Palace to be maintained at reduced cost without the need for a further programme of this scale.
- R&R will explore the most cost-effective and sustainable ways of providing logistical support to the building in the long term.
- R&R will plan any enabling works for temporary accommodation with longer-term benefits in mind.
- R&R will ensure that all nations and regions of the UK will have the opportunity to benefit from business and employment contracts generated by the programme.
- R&R will be managed and delivered in an open and transparent manner.
- R&R will be delivered strictly according to a plan with a clearly defined scope and timetable, agreed between an appropriately structured Parliamentary body and an independent Delivery Authority.

B: To reduce Parliament's operational risk

- R&R will enable the business of Parliament to continue uninterrupted by reducing the risk of a critical failure of services (power, heating, ventilation, etc.) or other health or safety risks.
- R&R will deliver infrastructure and services based on value for money that can be upgraded in the future with minimal disruption.

- R&R will lead by example by making environmentally sustainable choices.

C: To meet the needs of a 21st century Parliament for (i) the public

- R&R will support rights of direct and indirect public access to Parliament, including creating space in the Palace for Members of both Houses to meet constituents, the public and the media.
- R&R will improve the ways in which the public can engage with the work and heritage of Parliament, in terms of both physical and digital access, and in doing so balance the needs of public access with the working needs of Parliament.
- R&R will bring the Palace of Westminster up to appropriate standards of disability access and fire protection, at least commensurate with the minimum standards expected for public buildings.

C: To meet the needs of a 21st Century Parliament for (ii) Parliamentarians

- R&R will create a suitable working environment within the Palace for Members and staff.
- R&R design solutions for the Palace will strike a balance between private workspace, flexible work and meeting spaces, formal meeting spaces, and public and informal meeting spaces.

D: To protect the iconic and national heritage of the Palace of Westminster

- R&R will expedite the repair and restoration of damaged areas of the Palace and safeguard the fabric of the building against irreversible damage, while recognising the need for ongoing conservation work after the period of the Programme.
- R&R will maintain the Palace of Westminster's status as a Grade I listed building and part of a UNESCO World Heritage Site.
- R&R will reaffirm the historical integrity of the Palace.

5 Governance of the Programme

Governance

253. Both the Pre-Feasibility Study and the IOA stressed the need to set up clear, accountable governance arrangements for the next phase of the R&R Programme. The Pre-Feasibility Study said that the creation of a single client authority to oversee the Programme and to be politically accountable for decisions, costs and risks would be a “key requirement for a full renovation and modernisation”.¹⁴⁹ The IOA also concluded that the Programme’s success would depend on the establishment of an effective delivery model “with strategic governance and sponsor and client roles all clearly defined” and advocated the establishment by statute of a single client body.¹⁵⁰ In this Chapter we outline the governance required for the R&R Programme.

General principles and risks

254. The R&R Programme will require engineering and construction capability beyond anything that Parliament currently retains for routine maintenance and projects. Commercial partners will therefore be required to mobilise a skilled and sophisticated supply chain. The project will, rightly, be under continuous national and international scrutiny and there will be strong pressures to deliver on time, on budget and with appropriate quality.

255. The Programme Team has already carried out significant analysis of the risks which arise in complex, large-scale building projects, including those which arose during the construction of Portcullis House and the Scottish Parliament. While both of those projects were new buildings, the risks are certainly no less, and possibly greater, on a major renovation project. The generic risks include discovery of previously unknown building issues, an incomplete or ambiguous definition of the brief, changing the scope part-way through the project, lack of continuity in governance, changes in the political context, weak project and programme management, and weakness in the management of procurement and contracts. Obviously, it will therefore be essential to develop a governance structure which minimises and manages such risks.

256. Expert witnesses emphasised the need to create a clearly identifiable client for the Programme, akin to a non-executive board. Such a client would need to be precise in defining the scope and objectives of the Programme but, having authorised the delivery partner to proceed, would need to let the partner deliver the Programme without undue interference. Such a client would clearly need to have a deep understanding of the work of both Houses, but also be distinct from Parliament and be dedicated to the R&R Programme. This would allow the normal administration of both Houses (at both a political and official level) to continue with the different and equally important challenge of managing Parliamentary business as usual in temporary accommodation.

257. It has been suggested to us that a two-tier governance structure, similar to that adopted for the 2012 Olympic Games and the Crossrail project, might be appropriate.

¹⁴⁹ [Restoration and Renewal of the Palace of Westminster: Pre-Feasibility Study and Preliminary Strategic Business Case](#), October 2012, p 7

¹⁵⁰ Deloitte LLP, [Palace of Westminster Restoration and Renewal Programme Independent Options Appraisal](#), September 2014, Volume 1, p 25

The two tiers would involve a Sponsor Board (which would be the client) and a Delivery Authority.

Sponsor Board

258. In a two-tier governance system, the top level of governance would be the body that ‘sponsored’ the Programme, and became the guardian of it. The Institution of Civil Engineers (ICE) said it was “vital” that there should be a strong Sponsor Body for the Programme.¹⁵¹ The Chartered Institution of Building Services Engineers (CIBSE) noted that the successful completion in recent decades of three large and complex projects—the Olympic Park, the Channel Tunnel Rail Link and Heathrow Terminal 5—all involved a client body with “a clear vision, excellent leadership and world class project managers.”¹⁵²

259. The Sponsor Board would fulfil the following tasks:

- appointing and overseeing the work of the Delivery Authority,
- becoming guardian of the scope of the Programme, as agreed by Parliament,
- agreeing and overseeing both the budget and overall delivery of the Programme, and securing the funding, and
- providing one or more spokespeople for the Programme, and a sense of continuity.

260. The Sponsor Board would define and set the objectives relating to the R&R Programme and would need to be established in time to oversee major decisions at the start of the Programme. The exact role and composition of the Sponsor Board would be outlined in the implementing legislation for the Programme, so both Houses will have an opportunity to scrutinise and debate those issues as the bill passes through both Houses.

261. However, as a starting point, we suggest that legislation should address the following points:

- The Board should include:
 - four Members from each House, with cross-party representation,
 - a Government Minister, in order to provide assurance to commercial partners that the project had Government support,
 - the Clerk of the House of Commons, and the Clerk of the Parliaments from the House of Lords, in order to maintain co-ordination with the continuing work of Parliament and to ensure that the business needs of both Houses are taken into consideration at all stages of planning,
 - a senior civil servant (possibly to be nominated by the Chief Secretary to the Treasury), in order to ensure effective liaison between Parliament and the Government, and

¹⁵¹ Written evidence from the Institution of Civil Engineers ([RAR0042](#))

¹⁵² Supplementary written evidence from the Chartered Institution of Building Services Engineers ([RAR0066](#))

- two non-executive, non-political members with relevant expertise. These members could, for example, have a background in the heritage, construction or commercial sectors.
- If the Sponsor Board is too large then there is a danger that it will become too unwieldy to be effective. The Sponsor Board should not, therefore, have more than 14 members.
- All members of the Sponsor Board should have the same speaking and voting rights.
- The Sponsor Board should have the power to elect its own Chairman or Chairmen. However, the Chairman (or Chairmen) should be a member of either House of Parliament.
- There will be a clear need for continuity throughout the R&R Programme, and as part of the appointment process for the Sponsor Board, consideration should be given to the length of service that each member is expected to provide.
- It will also be important for the Sponsor Board (and through it, the Delivery Authority) to be held to account, and we therefore suggest that the legislation should also include provisions requiring the Sponsor Board to report to both Houses on a regular basis.

Delivery Authority

262. Sitting underneath the Sponsor Board, the second level of governance would be the Delivery Authority. The Delivery Authority would be a statutory body and would have its own chair, chief executive and directors. The Delivery Authority would employ its own staff, who would not be civil servants, and would have the management capacity and expertise to enter into contracts with a commercial delivery partner or partners. This would provide the additional client-side expertise needed to procure and manage the supply chain. Once the designs, budgets and schedules had been agreed by the Sponsor Board and Parliament, the Delivery Authority would be empowered to manage the Programme.

263. Mr Hirst of the ICE told us that a Delivery Authority would be very important in helping to bridge the gap between the client organisation and the agents delivering the work. In his view, it would be a challenge to agree the detail of the mandate for the Delivery Authority, but he advised that it would be crucial to set clear instructions about what the Authority was expected to do and what authority it had to act in its own name. This would provide it with some leeway in order to cope with the unexpected and to deal with issues as they arose.¹⁵³ In their written evidence, the ICE also pointed to the role of the Delivery Authority in helping to prevent scope creep—something that could be one of the Programme’s biggest risks.¹⁵⁴

264. The overheads associated with creating a dedicated arm’s-length delivery structure would be more than offset by the overall gains in efficiency and cost-effectiveness. The experience of the 2012 Olympics indicates that structures of this kind are also effective at working within tight time constraints.

¹⁵³ [Q 91](#)

¹⁵⁴ Written evidence from the Institution of Civil Engineers ([RAR0042](#))

Timings for establishing new governance mechanisms

265. Legislation will be required in order to establish the new governance mechanisms. However, it would be possible to establish a Sponsor Board and Delivery Authority in shadow form before the legislation received Royal Assent, provided that Parliament's intention to legislate was clear. This is common practice when new non-departmental bodies are being established.¹⁵⁵ In this case, Parliament's intention to legislate could be indicated by the passing of the draft motion, outlined in Chapter 6. Once both Houses had agreed to this motion, a shadow Sponsor Board could be appointed jointly by the House of Commons and House of Lords Commissions using existing powers. For the sake of continuity it would be desirable that appointments to a shadow organisation were made with the possibility in mind that some at least of those appointed might carry forward to the future Sponsor Board and serve as longer term advocates and guardians for the project.

266. Even in its shadow form a Sponsor Board could not only guide the implementation of decisions regarding the Palace but, if necessary, it could also oversee the enabling projects on which a timely commencement of the Palace work depended, such as the preparation of temporary accommodation. Agreement to cede control of particular enabling projects, such as the Northern Estate Programme (see paragraph 295), to the Sponsor Board would have to be given by the House of Commons and House of Lords Commissions.

267. The shadow Sponsor Board could also begin the process of appointing a shadow Delivery Authority. To begin with, this would be likely to involve the appointment of an Executive Chair, who could then make other key appointments and begin to establish the shadow body. A shadow Delivery Authority could begin to assemble delivery capability and to plan its strategies for engaging with commercial delivery partners. There would be an expectation that most recruits to the shadow Delivery Authority would remain in place once the statutory arrangements came into effect.

268. In the meantime, the Corporate Officers of the two Houses already have powers under the Parliamentary Corporate Bodies Act 1992 to initiate the process of acquiring properties for temporary accommodation, so could begin the work of examining the availability of possible buildings required and the terms on which they could be obtained. This information is likely to be required by the Delivery Authority in order to carry out its validation and feasibility work, so could be passed to the Delivery Authority once it was established. The business case to justify and obtain funding for acquisition would be completed as soon as possible (preparatory work has already begun) and design for fit-out would proceed as rapidly as possible.

269. It will be vital during the delivery phase of the Programme that the statutory Sponsor Board has full control of the agreed scope and the associated budget. However, in developing the agreed scope—which will include a concept design—the Sponsor Board will need assurance that the plans are acceptable to both Houses. There will therefore need to be a clear process for consulting Members and staff of both Houses as the designs are developed. Ultimately, both Houses will also need to approve the concept design, budget and schedule before the works can commence.

¹⁵⁵ [Public Bodies: A Guide for Departments](#) (Cabinet Office, 2006), Chapter 4: Setting up a New Executive NDPB – The Practical Tasks

270. A Programme of the size and complexity of Restoration and Renewal will require strong governance in order to set clear and realistic budgets and timescales, to ensure that the works are conducted in a way which ensures that the needs of both Houses are met, and to avoid changes to the scope of the work part way through the Programme.

271. We recommend that a Sponsor Board should be established to oversee the delivery of the R&R Programme and to become a guardian for it. The Sponsor Board should include representatives from both Houses and Government, and possibly others with a heritage or construction background. Appointments to the Sponsor Board should be made with continuity in mind. The Sponsor Board should also be required to report to both Houses on a regular basis.

272. We recommend that the Sponsor Board appoint an arm's-length Delivery Authority to manage the delivery of the Programme. The Delivery Authority should be given responsibility for the delivery of the Programme and for ensuring that it is delivered on time, to budget and to specification. The Delivery Authority should also be responsible for validating Parliament's preferred choices on the delivery option and scope of the Programme, as well as the temporary accommodation provided for both Houses.

273. Given the need to proceed quickly with the Programme, we recommend that, subject to both Houses' approval of this recommendation, the House of Commons and House of Lords Commissions should establish a Sponsor Board in shadow form. This shadow Sponsor Board would be able to make a start on all the essential work required for the Programme, before being formally established. The shadow Sponsor Board should begin the process of appointing a shadow Delivery Authority in order to initiate work on the Programme. The shadow Delivery Authority could also carry out the preparatory work required by the Delivery Authority, before being formally appointed. Enabling legislation should nonetheless still be introduced as soon as possible.

274. We recommend that once a concept design, proposed budget and estimated schedule for the Programme have been developed, they must be approved by both Houses.

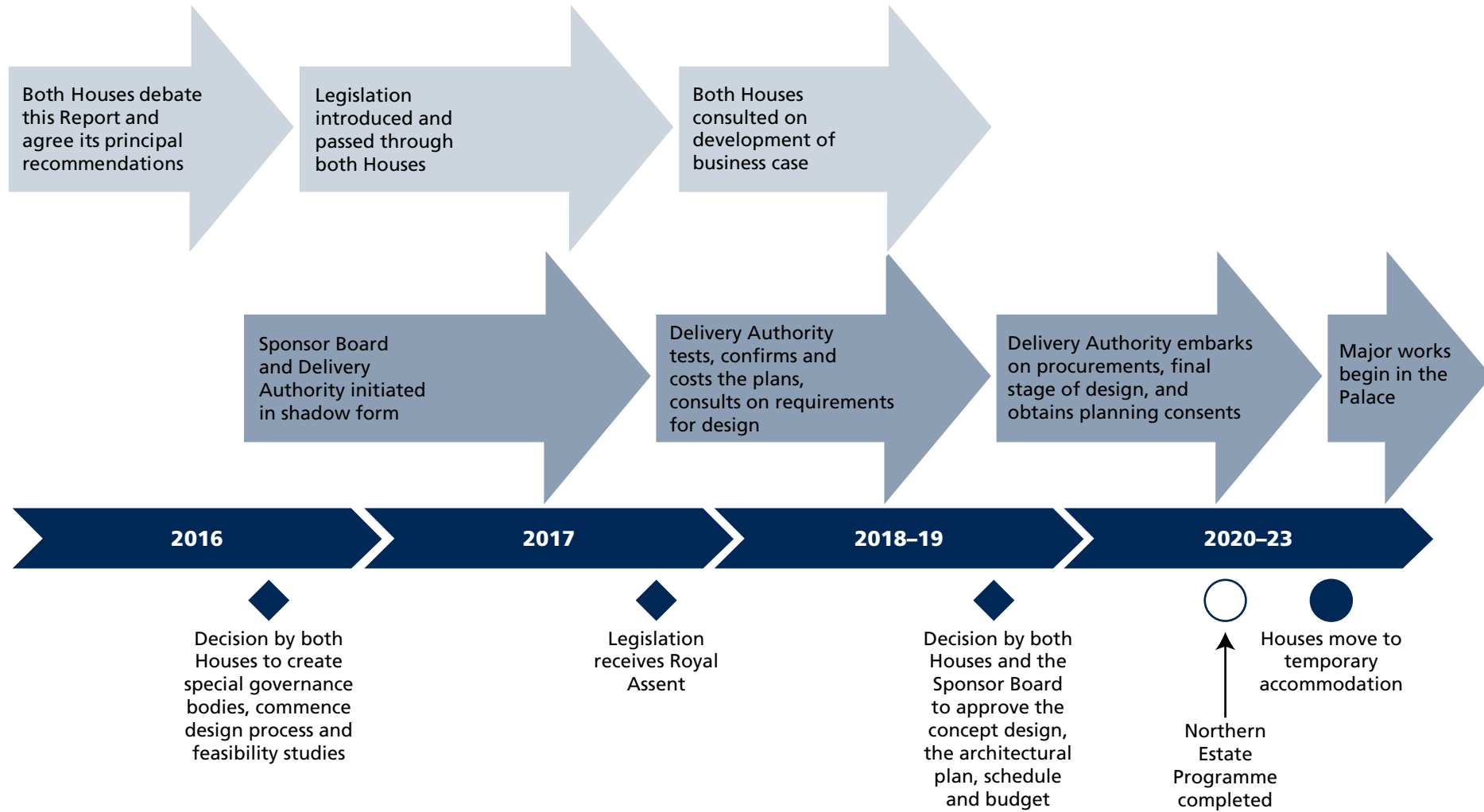
6 Next steps

The next steps for the R&R Programme

275. As we explained in Chapter 1, this Committee was established following many years of previous work, and our inquiry has been one of a series of steps in the development of the R&R Programme. Our job was to make recommendations on the preferred option for the delivery and scope of the Programme, as well as the next steps. We have now completed our work and hope that the conclusions outlined in this report will enable both Houses to make informed decisions on these options, and allow the Programme to proceed effectively to the next stage.

276. Throughout our inquiry it has become increasingly apparent that the works to the Palace of Westminster are now pressing and that momentum on the R&R Programme needs to be maintained. We have therefore devoted considerable attention to considering, with Parliament's senior officials, the next steps for the Programme and the key points at which Parliament will need to take decisions. Figure 9 outlines some of the key next steps that we recommend should be taken, which are discussed in more detail in the following paragraphs. It is important to stress that no firm timescales for each of these stages have yet been established, and that the indicative timings shown in Figure 9 do *not* represent a predicted schedule for the Programme. While Figure 9 provides an indication of the types of activities which will need to take place over the coming months and years, at this early stage of the Programme, a degree of risk has been built into the timescales to provide contingency for delays as the Programme progresses, and it is likely that these estimated timescales will need to be amended in due course. It will be for the Delivery Authority, once established, to put together a more detailed schedule for the development of the Programme.

Figure 9: Next steps for the Restoration and Renewal Programme



1: Agreeing the principal recommendations

277. Following the publication of this report, both Houses will be invited to debate our conclusions and agree to the establishment of a Sponsor Board and Delivery Authority, in order to allow the Programme to progress to its next stage. A draft Motion calling for the establishment of a Sponsor Board and Delivery Authority is contained in Box 6, at the end of this Chapter.

2: Shadow Sponsor Board and shadow Delivery Authority appointed

278. Once both Houses have approved the principle of establishing a Sponsor Board and Delivery Authority, and in order to prevent delays to the Programme, the House of Commons and House of Lords Commissions should consider the appointment of a shadow Sponsor Board. Once formed, the shadow Sponsor Board could begin the process of making early appointments to a shadow Delivery Authority.

279. When the shadow forms of the Sponsor Board and the Delivery Authority have been established, they would, in time, assume responsibility from the Programme Team for the essential work required to keep the Programme on track. During this interim period, any expenditure by those bodies would have to be approved by the Accounting Officers of both Houses, along with the House of Commons and House of Lords Commissions.

3: Legislation

280. Draft legislation will be required in order to formally establish the Sponsor Board and Delivery Authority on a statutory footing, as well as to establish any bespoke planning regimes required for the R&R Programme, and any other necessary measures. This legislation would outline the roles and remits of both the Sponsor Board and the Delivery Authority, and would also specify how members of the Sponsor Board should be appointed.

281. The Programme Team have already begun the process of developing a draft bill. Should both Houses confirm their intention to create a Sponsor Board and Delivery Authority (by passing the Motion proposed in Box 6), this draft bill will be developed further and brought forward soon.

4: Delivery authority preparations

282. Once the necessary legislation has received Royal Assent, the statutory forms of the Sponsor Board and Delivery Authority would take control of the preparatory work completely, as well as manage their own budgets. The preparatory work to be carried out by the Delivery Authority will include the following areas.

Feasibility work on the preferred delivery option

283. The Delivery Authority, once established, must first analyse and validate our conclusion on the preferred delivery option, in order to confirm that it represents the best solution. Furthermore, a scenario involving a full decant will be dependent on appropriate temporary accommodation being found, as well as there being sufficient capacity in the construction and heritage sectors to deliver the works in one go. The Delivery Authority

will therefore need to assess these areas in further detail and make a final recommendation on whether a full decant is viable.

Due diligence on the preferred temporary accommodation sites

284. We have identified Richmond House, the Queen Elizabeth II Conference Centre and 100 Parliament Street as our preferred locations for temporary accommodation on the basis of the information available at this point. However, feasibility work on all of these options is ongoing and further due diligence will be required in order to determine whether they can fully meet the needs of both Houses of Parliament. This work will need to involve negotiations on the possibilities for their acquisition, fit-out and preparation for occupation by Parliament.

Value-for-money assessments of additional works to be included within the scope of the Programme

285. In Chapter 4 we concluded that it would be a mistake to miss this one-off opportunity, while essential works are being conducted, to deliver other benefits. We therefore recommend that the scope of the works should be extended beyond the basic ‘do minimum’ option, as long as the marginal cost of the additional work is acceptable to Parliament in absolute terms, as well as relative to the total project. Any additional work factored into the R&R Programme will need to offer excellent value for money and be subjected to a rigorous business case. One of the tasks of the Delivery Authority should therefore be to carry out a value-for-money assessment of all the various elements of the R&R Programme, with a thorough analysis of the potential benefits of each area of work, as well as the costs. This will enable the Sponsor Board to choose between a range of properly costed options for the scope of the Programme.

Design work

286. In order to maintain momentum and to ensure that the Programme is not delayed, the Programme Team, under the authority of the House of Commons Commission and House of Lords House Committee, has already begun scoping work to assess the assets within the Palace of Westminster and the likely requirements. This information will be compiled into design briefs which will need to be provided to the designers commissioned for the Programme to enable them to understand the use of the building and to develop some detailed plans for the work.

287. Some of the work in technical, behind-the-scenes areas has already been conducted by the Programme Team; for example, thought has already been given to the types of heating and cooling technologies which might be required in the building, as well as to drainage, plumbing and security systems. However, there is still much more work to be done and, in order to develop the more substantive elements of the designs, it will be essential to consult Members, staff and others who work in the Palace, as well as the different types of visitors who use the building. Some consultation will need to be specific to each House, whereas some will need to be bicameral. It will be for the Sponsor Board and Delivery Authority to determine exactly how such consultation should be conducted.

Outline Business Case

288. Following the validation and feasibility work, an Outline Business Case will need to be completed in order to justify the conclusions reached. This will need to include detailed proposals on the concept design and schedule for the works, as well as the proposed budget. This work will be continued by the Programme Team and then taken on by the Delivery Authority once established.

5: Approval of costed plan, schedule and budget

289. The Outline Business Case, including the concept design, schedule and budget, will need to be approved by both Houses and the Sponsor Board.

6: Delivery Authority carries out enabling activities

290. Following this approval, the Delivery Authority will be responsible for procuring the major works contracts, mobilising the supply chain, finalising the designs, seeking the necessary planning consents and embarking on other enabling activities.

7: Works commence

291. Finally, once the steps above have been completed, works will commence on the Palace of Westminster.

Scheduling of the R&R Programme

292. No schedule has yet been set for the R&R Programme. For the purposes of comparing different scenarios, the IOA assumed in 2014 a possible start date of Q2 2020 for the construction works. However, given that Parliament has not yet chosen a preferred way forward, it will not be possible to begin the decant and works as soon as this. The list of essential stages outlined in Figure 9 indicates that, if the next steps are taken speedily, works on the Palace might be able to commence in or around 2023. It also demonstrates how slips at the beginning of the Programme might lead to delays further down the track.

Preparatory work

293. Preparatory work has already begun on the steps listed in Figure 9, but further progress will be subject to various risks and uncertainties. While there are good reasons for wanting the works to begin as soon as possible, expert witnesses have told us that, with programmes of this size and complexity, time spent preparing for the works at the beginning generally pays off at the end. The Institution of Civil Engineers told us that one of the ways of mitigating procurement and construction risks would be to avoid significant change midway through the contract and noted that “time spent before letting the contract in getting the design and specification right will pay dividends.”¹⁵⁶ Rushing to start work on site at the earliest opportunity will not, therefore, necessarily lead to the Programme being completed early.

¹⁵⁶ Written evidence from the Institution of Civil Engineers ([RAR0042](#))

294. One of the biggest dependencies for the R&R Programme will be the development of temporary accommodation. If further feasibility work does confirm that Richmond House and the Queen Elizabeth II Conference Centre are the preferred options for the House of Commons and House of Lords respectively, then the negotiations necessary in order to acquire the properties, negotiate the terms of occupation, develop the designs and gain planning consents could take several years.

Northern Estate Programme

295. In respect of Richmond House, there is a further complicating factor. The House of Commons has, for several years, been planning a programme to renovate the buildings currently in the Northern Estate. The main objects of the Northern Estate Programme (NEP) include making the buildings compliant with a range of regulatory and statutory building regulations, most notably fire safety, addressing significant weakness in the Northern Estate's M&E plant, and addressing problems with plumbing and other facilities which affect occupants on a regular basis. Some of the many issues with the Northern Estate came to the fore in June 2016, when heavy rainfall led to significant flooding in the Norman Shaw buildings, leading to the decant of a large number of MPs' offices during the week of the EU referendum.

296. It is intended that Members currently based in the Norman Shaw buildings will move into Richmond House in order to facilitate the NEP, before Richmond House can be developed for use under the R&R Programme. We have been assured by officials that, at current estimates, it should be possible to complete the NEP before decant and construction work for the R&R Programme needs to begin. However, given the high risks of M&E failure in the Palace, it is obvious that any unnecessary delays to the Programme should be avoided.

297. The governance of the NEP currently resides with the House of Commons Commission, as it is a programme which affects the House of Commons alone, whereas the R&R Programme is governed jointly by the House of Commons and House of Lords Commissions. While constitutional and administrative boundaries between the two Houses need to be respected, there would be merit in ensuring that these two Programmes are managed together in a coherent fashion.

Completion of the Programme

298. We have also considered the possible end date of the R&R Programme; in particular, the date by which both Houses might be able to reoccupy the building. The IOA estimated that the construction period under a full decant could be in the range of five to eight years. Even if the works can be completed within the lower end of this range, it would mean that they would be likely to span two Parliaments. At the upper end of the range, if works do not start before 2023, there is the possibility that Parliament might be decanted for the whole of the 2025–30 Parliament. Given the significance of being able to sit and speak in the historic House of Commons Chamber, it would be preferable if the construction works were scheduled so that MPs elected in the 2020 general election could sit in the

historic Chamber before decant, and those elected in 2025 could sit in the Chamber before the dissolution scheduled for April 2030.¹⁵⁷

299. Because of the deteriorating condition of the Palace infrastructure and the growing risk of operational disruption, the R&R Programme should begin at the earliest possible date. However, there must be sufficient lead time to ensure that the Programme is properly planned, designed and governed. Any proposed schedule for the works must also make contingency allowances for risks or delays.

300. The scope and timescales for the Northern Estate Programme may need to be reviewed and adjusted to meet the requirements of the R&R Programme. We recommend that the House of Commons and House of Lords Commissions should give further consideration to joining up and aligning the governance of the NEP and the R&R Programme, so that the two programmes can be managed in a coherent way while respecting the independence of both Houses.

Managing the supply chain

301. One of the biggest jobs for the Delivery Authority will be managing the complex supply chain required for the R&R Programme. Because it delivers the Programme most quickly, a full decant would make the greatest demand on market capacity and capability because the work would be concentrated in the shortest period. If the Delivery Authority confirms our conclusions on the preferred delivery option, and Parliament ultimately decides to proceed via a full decant, the Programme will be particularly dependent on specialist skills which, especially in the heritage sector, tend to be found in small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). We have therefore been advised, and agree, that market engagement should begin at the earliest possible opportunity.

302. The Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) said that, throughout the Programme, there would be a significant demand for specialist trades in order to maintain and restore the internal and external fabric of the building. This would require sufficient capacity in both the professional and craft skills in the heritage and conservation sector. RIBA noted that there was a “great skills shortage issue resulting from declining investment into the conservation sector and a large pipeline of works in the UK that would divert resources from the R&R Programme.” However, even without this pipeline of expected works, there might still be insufficient skills available in the market to tackle the scale of the challenge entailed in the R&R Programme. In their opinion, it would therefore be important to build skills capacity in professional and craft skills in the heritage and conservation sector. In this way, RIBA felt that the R&R Programme would be “an ideal opportunity for educating and training the next generation in the skills needed to maintain, repair and enhance the historic buildings and to be an ongoing exemplar project for those skills and craftsmanship.” Furthermore, RIBA told us that many of those skills were held in small or micro businesses and suggested that the procurement processes for the R&R Programme must therefore “embrace” those organisations.¹⁵⁸

303. Ms Lynda Jubb, Chair of the Building Conservation Forum at the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS), also noted that the heritage sector was characterised by

¹⁵⁷ This is on the assumption that the current electoral timetable under the Fixed-term Parliaments Act 2011 is not disrupted by an early parliamentary general election under s. 2 or by amendment of the Act.

¹⁵⁸ Written evidence from the Royal Institute of British Architects ([RAR0035](#))

small, independent firms, many of which were based outside London. In order to engage with those firms it would be important to have a strategy “to package the work to make it attractive to them.”¹⁵⁹ She added that the R&R Programme could be an “exemplar project” demonstrating how training and the sustainability of skills could be built into large programmes.¹⁶⁰ The Chartered Institution of Building Services Engineers (CIBSE) also suggested that, rather than viewing the supply and capacity as a challenge, the R&R Programme provided a unique opportunity to develop a new generation of skilled heritage workers, through apprenticeships and other career development activity, and also to bring a significant number of young women into the sector.¹⁶¹

304. This means that the main delivery partner or partners will need to be capable of mobilising and managing a complex supply chain, including multiple companies, from large construction companies to small, specialist firms. While this will be challenging it also brings opportunities to engage with SMEs, to spread the work well beyond London and the south-east of England, and to develop a strategy for training and creating apprenticeships that would leave a legacy of skills and experience. Parliament already employs many skilled craftspeople of its own, and we hope that their skills and their unparalleled knowledge of the building will also play an important part in the Programme.

305. The IOA advised that there would be a symbiotic relationship between the Programme and its supply chain.¹⁶² The eagerness of SMEs to engage with the Programme will depend upon a number of factors, including the consistency of strategy and intention of the Programme, the strength, internal unity and professionalism of the client, how any political risks are managed, and how much risk commercial partners are expected to carry. Early and consistent engagement with SMEs is therefore likely to be most effective. Furthermore, while procurement rules prevent contracts being awarded to companies based solely on their geographical location, early and sustained engagement with companies throughout the regions is likely to increase the number of businesses throughout the United Kingdom which tender for contracts. Requirements to engage with companies in the nations and regions of the United Kingdom could be built into the objectives for the Delivery Authority, as could a requirement to encourage and facilitate the involvement of SMEs.

306. Conducting the works in one phase will make a significant demand on market capacity and capability. A wide range of specialist trades will be required in a short space of time, and the Delivery Authority will need to be capable of managing a large and complex supply chain. We therefore recommend that market engagement should begin early, and be facilitated by the early establishment of a shadow Sponsor Board and shadow Delivery Authority.

307. The Programme will present significant opportunities to engage with small and medium-sized enterprises throughout the United Kingdom, especially those with specialist skills in the heritage and conservation sector. There is a risk that there will be a shortage of skills in those sectors and that a lack of capacity could hamper the R&R Programme. On the other hand, the Programme could also provide a significant opportunity to support the development of these skills and to increase capacity in

¹⁵⁹ [Q 77](#)

¹⁶⁰ [Q 81](#)

¹⁶¹ Supplementary written evidence from the Chartered Institution of Building Services Engineers ([RAR0066](#))

¹⁶² Deloitte LLP, [Palace of Westminster Restoration and Renewal Programme Independent Options Appraisal](#), September 2014, Volume 1, p 126

these sectors. We recommend that the Sponsor Board and Delivery Authority should consider how apprenticeships and other training schemes could be delivered as part of the R&R Programme, in order to increase capacity in this area and to provide a lasting legacy of skills from the Programme.

308. The Programme also provides an opportunity to engage with businesses, especially SMEs beyond London and the south-east of England. We recommend that the Sponsor Board and Delivery Authority begin market engagement early, and ensure that such engagement reaches out as widely as possible.

Planning

309. The Palace is a Grade I listed building and forms part of the Westminster World Heritage Site.¹⁶³ Any developments or adaptations to the building therefore have to be considered carefully and are subject to planning legislation (including listed building consent). Since the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, and the 2006 Order which applies it to Parliament,¹⁶⁴ the primary decision-maker on planning applications for the Parliamentary Estate has been the planning committee at Westminster City Council, with Historic England (formerly English Heritage) as a statutory consultee. Westminster City Council is required to consult other interested organisations about heritage applications, including bodies such as the Victorian Society, the Council for British Archaeology and local interest groups. Applications may also be appealed or called in for review by the Greater London Authority or the Secretary of State if matters of wider London or national policy and significance are involved. With a construction project as large as the R&R Programme, planning issues have the potential to introduce delay and uncertainty which could significantly affect cost and the commencement of works.

310. The IOA concluded that, because of the historical significance of the Palace and the constraints which exist within the original design and fabric, there may be a need to ease compliance with some requirements under, for example, building regulations. It noted that a close dialogue with English Heritage (now Historic England) would be required “to reach agreement for alternative provision in areas where design flexibility can be accommodated.”¹⁶⁵ As next steps, the IOA recommended early engagement with Westminster City Council and English Heritage (now Historic England).¹⁶⁶

311. Of course, it would be possible for Parliament to legislate to become its own planning authority, though Parliament might not wish to adopt such an approach unless absolutely necessary. Mr Feilden, Chair of the Conservation Advisory Group at RIBA, stressed that it would be important for Parliament not to “duck out of the planning and building system.” In his opinion, Parliament needed to “lead the country” in that respect.¹⁶⁷ Ms Jubb also felt that Parliament needed to “demonstrate the higher standards of compliance.” However, she noted that Parliament should be able to make the protective heritage regimes work, and she suggested that heritage and planning issues should be built into the R&R programme

163 The Westminster World Heritage site, which is monitored by UNESCO, consists of the Palace of Westminster and Westminster Abbey, including St Margaret’s Church.

164 The Planning (Application to the Houses of Parliament) Order 2006

165 Deloitte LLP, [Palace of Westminster Restoration and Renewal Programme Independent Options Appraisal](#), September 2014, Volume 1, p 143

166 *Ibid.*, p 144

167 [Q 94](#)

as part of an “overall engagement and collaboration agenda,” to ensure that the protection regime was left “enhanced” rather than “disabled” at the end of the Programme.¹⁶⁸

312. We have not scrutinised the planning process in detail as part of our inquiry. In order to minimise delays to the Programme caused by planning issues, we are initially attracted to the idea of implementing a planning regime for the R&R Programme along similar lines to that used for nationally significant infrastructure projects. However, this is a matter which will require further detailed consideration before a conclusion is reached. As an initial next step, the Programme Team, and subsequently the Delivery Authority, will need to consult Westminster City Council, Historic England and other stakeholders about how a satisfactory planning regime could be established.

313. In restoring the Palace of Westminster, Parliament should ensure that it is an exemplar in following the protective regimes and regulations it has agreed for others. However, the R&R Programme will be a large and complex project, involving a nationally significant building in the middle of a UNESCO World Heritage Site. The need to protect and conserve the building must be balanced against the requirement to modernise it for a 21st Century Parliament and its public. Parliament could legislate to become its own planning authority, though that might not be the preferred approach. We therefore recommend that officials in both Houses should begin engagement and consultation with Westminster City Council, Historic England and other interested bodies on the ways in which planning issues could be addressed throughout the Programme.

314. In order to guide the consultation and engagement with Westminster City Council, Historic England and others, we recommend the following key principles for the R&R Programme:

- **Planning issues should be addressed strategically, based on a clear vision of the national significance of the Palace of Westminster as the home of Parliament and part of a World Heritage Site.**
- **The planning process should be streamlined as much as possible to mitigate the risks of uncertainty, delay and additional cost.**
- **The planning process should involve full and open consultation with relevant national and local bodies and with individuals.**
- **The planning process should be designed to encourage creative and appropriate design solutions.**

Draft Motion for agreement by both Houses

315. Many of our recommendations in this report are likely to require further work before they can be implemented, or will need further consultation with Members, staff and others. These matters will of course take time.

316. In the light of the deteriorating condition of the Palace of Westminster, and the pressing need to carry out a major renovation programme, it is essential that the R&R Programme now proceeds to its next stages without delay. Many of the conclusions in this report require

¹⁶⁸ [Q 96](#)

further validation from the Delivery Authority, and many of our recommendations point towards the need for further work to be undertaken on the feasibility of our preferred scenarios. Therefore, in order for the Restoration and Renewal Programme to proceed effectively, it is essential that the necessary governance arrangements are put in place as soon as possible.

317. Furthermore, it is also important that both Houses should signify, at this stage, their endorsement in principle to the conclusions reached in this report on the delivery option and possible scope of the Programme.

318. We therefore recommend that both Houses should agree to the following Motion as soon as possible. Once agreed, this will allow Parliamentary authorities to begin the next stage of planning and preparation.

Box 6: Draft Motion for agreement by both Houses

That this House takes note of the report of the Joint Committee on the Palace of Westminster; agrees that there is a clear and pressing need to repair the services in the Palace of Westminster in a comprehensive and strategic manner to prevent catastrophic failure in the next decade; endorses the Committee's opinion that a full decant of the Palace of Westminster is the best delivery option in principle; takes note of the case for considering additional work as part of the Programme, subject to its cost-effectiveness; endorses the Committee's recommendation that a Sponsor Board and Delivery Authority be established by legislation to take forward work on the preferred delivery option, to develop a business case for the work to enable a costed programme to be approved by both Houses of Parliament, and to commission and oversee the work required; agrees that immediate steps be taken now to establish a shadow Sponsor Board and shadow Delivery Authority; and notes that works in the Palace should commence as early as possible in the next decade.

Conclusions and recommendations

The need for the work

1. We endorse the findings of the Pre-Feasibility Study on the Restoration and Renewal of the Palace of Westminster and conclude that there is a clear and pressing need to tackle the backlog of work required in a comprehensive and strategic manner. The mechanical and electrical services are the main driver for the Restoration and Renewal Programme, but there are many other essential works which should be tackled alongside this work as a matter of urgency, such as works to prevent water penetration, asbestos removal, fire safety works and replacement of secondary services. (Paragraph 75)
2. The longer the essential work is left, the greater the risk becomes that the building might suffer a sudden, catastrophic failure, or that small, incremental failures might make the building uninhabitable. The need to tackle the work speedily has greatly influenced our deliberations on the preferred way in which to deliver the work. (Paragraph 76)

Delivery option

3. The analysis in the Independent Options Appraisal, and all the independent, expert evidence we have received, have pointed us to one clear conclusion: that a full decant of the Palace of Westminster is the best delivery option in principle. It allows the works to be completed in the shortest possible timeframe, it minimises the risk of disruption to the day-to-day operation of Parliament, it is likely to involve the lowest capital cost, it minimises the risk to safety of construction operatives and occupants, it minimises the risk to the Programme itself, and it provides the greatest scope for meeting the needs of a 21st Century Parliament building. (Paragraph 127)
4. Subject to that option being determined to be feasible, achievable and cost-effective, and eventual validation by the Delivery Authority, we recommend that the Restoration and Renewal of the Palace of Westminster should be conducted in a single phase, with both Houses moving out to temporary accommodation for the duration of the works. (Paragraph 128)
5. It is clear that the two Houses of Parliament and Government need to be located close to each other. The location of temporary accommodation a long way from Whitehall would add significantly to the cost and logistical complexity of the R&R Programme, and introduce numerous challenges for the smooth operation of both Parliament and Government. Furthermore, unnecessary additional cost can be avoided if Parliament can continue to make use of its current buildings on the Parliamentary Estate during the R&R Programme. We therefore conclude that the temporary accommodation for both Houses for the period of the R&R Programme should be located as close to the Palace of Westminster as possible. (Paragraph 138)
6. We recommend that, in the design and fit-out of any temporary accommodation, subject to the need for a cost-effective and economic solution, consideration be given

to the possible uses to which the buildings might be put when the R&R Programme has concluded, including their onward sale if appropriate. (Paragraph 142)

7. Our recommendation for a full decant of the Palace of Westminster is contingent on suitable temporary accommodation being procured for both Houses. As far as possible, the solutions for temporary accommodation should enable the continued effective use of existing Parliamentary buildings, in order to minimise cost and disruption. When planning for decant, we recommend that the administrations of the two Houses should work together in order to ensure that the best use is made of existing Parliamentary buildings, including the sharing of buildings between the two Houses if required. (Paragraph 188)
8. The House of Commons already owns a number of buildings within the Northern Estate, and many MPs' offices are located in those buildings. Subject to further feasibility work, value-for-money assessments and validation by the Sponsor Board and Delivery Authority, we conclude that the best decant solution for the House of Commons appears to be a solution based around Richmond House and the Northern Estate. (Paragraph 189)
9. For the House of Lords, subject to further feasibility work, value-for-money assessments and validation by the Sponsor Board and Delivery Authority, we conclude that the best decant solution appears to be the establishment of a temporary Chamber and supporting offices in the Queen Elizabeth II Conference Centre. (Paragraph 190)
10. For both Houses, it would be desirable for Members' offices to be located as close to the temporary Chambers as possible, either within the same building, or very close by. In order to facilitate this, we recommend that the R&R Programme Team and, when established, the Sponsor Board and Delivery Authority, should continue to work with the Government Property Unit in order to identify space within the Government Estate, such as the Treasury building, which could be used for additional Members' offices and other services. (Paragraph 191)
11. For both Houses, it will be vital to ensure that necessary provisions are made for the essential staff and offices which need to be located close to the Chambers. In contrast, during the period of the works, some services could be scaled back or provided differently in order to reduce the amount of temporary accommodation required and the cost of the Programme. The Programme Team is in the process of assessing the functions and services which need to be located close to the Chambers, and we recommend that Member and staff consultation should be factored into this ongoing work as a key priority. (Paragraph 192)
12. For both Houses, the temporary decant solution should be designed and constructed with legacy value in mind. Wherever possible, we recommend that the temporary provisions made for Chambers, Member and staff offices during the period of the works should be designed with a view to reusing or repurposing those buildings after the Restoration and Renewal Programme in a way which ensures best value for money for the taxpayer. (Paragraph 193)
13. The development of temporary accommodation for both Houses will require further feasibility work and detailed analysis. Although this work will be started by

Parliamentary officials, it will be completed by the Delivery Authority once established. It is essential that Members and staff be involved and consulted throughout this process in order to ensure that the temporary accommodation adequately meets the needs and requirements of the users of those buildings, as well as being cost-effective. In order to guide the development of temporary accommodation options as part of the next phase of the Programme, we recommend a number of criteria for temporary accommodation, outlined in Box 2. (Paragraph 195)

14. We recommend that the final plans for temporary accommodation be drawn up by the Delivery Authority, for approval by the Sponsor Board and, ultimately, by both Houses. The Delivery Authority and the Sponsor Board, working together, will have to ensure that the temporary accommodation fully meets the needs of Members of both Houses and also represents good value for money, having regard to its use during the R&R Programme and to any possible legacy use afterwards. (Paragraph 196)

Scope of the Programme

15. It is clear that the Palace of Westminster lags behind many other public buildings in terms of its standards of visitor facilities, accessibility, working environment and environmental performance. There is also a significant amount of conservation work which is required to the building, over and above simply making it watertight. While each of these issues could be addressed in part by adopting a 'bare minimum' approach to the R&R Programme, there is also significant scope to go further and to make real, significant changes to the way in which the building operates and how people function within it. (Paragraph 241)
16. The Restoration and Renewal Programme represents a one-off opportunity to renew and transform the Palace of Westminster into a home fit for a 21st Century Parliament, while preserving the best aspects of its fine Victorian heritage. Future generations will not thank us if we fail to seize that opportunity, and instead preserve for posterity all the obstacles to public access and to the effective working of Parliament which the building currently embodies. We therefore conclude that it would be a mistake to miss this one-off opportunity, while essential works are being conducted to the Palace, to deliver other defined benefits as long as they offer excellent value for money at the same time. But nor should we spend taxpayers' money on unnecessary embellishments and fripperies. (Paragraph 247)
17. It is not possible at this stage to provide a definitive list of the types of work that might be included in the Programme and more detailed specifications will need to be drawn up by the Delivery Authority in due course. However, we recommend that the scope of works should be extended beyond the basic 'do minimum' option, given that the marginal cost of much of this work will be relatively low, and there is the scope to achieve significant economies of scale by incorporating it into the wider Programme. (Paragraph 248)
18. A key test for all the design decisions for the Programme should be the delivery of value for money for the taxpayer. In the current fiscal climate, we will need to be able to demonstrate convincingly that every penny which is spent on the Programme, beyond the bare minimum which is needed to secure the future of the Palace of

Westminster, delivers a clear benefit to the nation. The precise scope, quality and design of each area of work will need to be tested and considered in much greater detail as the Programme progresses, and then subjected to a rigorous business case. While we recommend that further works should be carried out in addition to the essential mechanical and electrical services, the cost of the Programme and potential value for money for the taxpayer will need to be considered and reviewed at every stage. The works should also be designed in order to equip Parliament for the future and to ensure that another programme of this scale is never required again. (Paragraph 249)

19. Subject to rigorous value-for-money assessments being conducted by the Delivery Authority, we recommend that, as well as the minimum, essential level of work required under the Restoration and Renewal Programme, both Houses should agree in principle to include in the scope of the Restoration and Renewal Programme additional improvements to the building. (Paragraph 250)
20. In order to guide the development of the brief for the Restoration and Renewal Programme, we recommend a series of Objectives and Guiding Principles for the R&R Programme, set out in Box 5. (Paragraph 252)

Governance of the Programme

21. A Programme of the size and complexity of Restoration and Renewal will require strong governance in order to set clear and realistic budgets and timescales, to ensure that the works are conducted in a way which ensures that the needs of both Houses are met, and to avoid changes to the scope of the work part way through the Programme. (Paragraph 270)
22. We recommend that a Sponsor Board should be established to oversee the delivery of the R&R Programme and to become a guardian for it. The Sponsor Board should include representatives from both Houses and Government, and possibly others with a heritage or construction background. Appointments to the Sponsor Board should be made with continuity in mind. The Sponsor Board should also be required to report to both Houses on a regular basis. (Paragraph 271)
23. We recommend that the Sponsor Board appoint an arm's-length Delivery Authority to manage the delivery of the Programme. The Delivery Authority should be given responsibility for the delivery of the Programme and for ensuring that it is delivered on time, to budget and to specification. The Delivery Authority should also be responsible for validating Parliament's preferred choices on the delivery option and scope of the Programme, as well as the temporary accommodation provided for both Houses. (Paragraph 272)
24. Given the need to proceed quickly with the Programme, we recommend that, subject to both Houses' approval of this recommendation, the House of Commons and House of Lords Commissions should establish a Sponsor Board in shadow form. This shadow Sponsor Board would be able to make a start on all the essential work required for the Programme, before being formally established. The shadow Sponsor Board should begin the process of appointing a shadow Delivery Authority in order to initiate work on the Programme. The shadow Delivery Authority could

also carry out the preparatory work required by the Delivery Authority, before being formally appointed. Enabling legislation should nonetheless still be introduced as soon as possible. (Paragraph 273)

25. We recommend that once a concept design, proposed budget and estimated schedule for the Programme have been developed, they must be approved by both Houses. (Paragraph 274)

Next steps

26. Because of the deteriorating condition of the Palace infrastructure and the growing risk of operational disruption, the R&R Programme should begin at the earliest possible date. However, there must be sufficient lead time to ensure that the Programme is properly planned, designed and governed. Any proposed schedule for the works must also make contingency allowances for risks or delays. (Paragraph 299)
27. The scope and timescales for the Northern Estate Programme may need to be reviewed and adjusted to meet the requirements of the R&R Programme. We recommend that the House of Commons and House of Lords Commissions should give further consideration to joining up and aligning the governance of the NEP and the R&R Programme, so that the two programmes can be managed in a coherent way while respecting the independence of both Houses. (Paragraph 300)
28. Conducting the works in one phase will make a significant demand on market capacity and capability. A wide range of specialist trades will be required in a short space of time, and the Delivery Authority will need to be capable of managing a large and complex supply chain. We therefore recommend that market engagement should begin early, and be facilitated by the early establishment of a shadow Sponsor Board and shadow Delivery Authority. (Paragraph 306)
29. The Programme will present significant opportunities to engage with small and medium-sized enterprises throughout the United Kingdom, especially those with specialist skills in the heritage and conservation sector. There is a risk that there will be a shortage of skills in those sectors and that a lack of capacity could hamper the R&R Programme. On the other hand, the Programme could also provide a significant opportunity to support the development of these skills and to increase capacity in these sectors. We recommend that the Sponsor Board and Delivery Authority should consider how apprenticeships and other training schemes could be delivered as part of the R&R Programme, in order to increase capacity in this area and to provide a lasting legacy of skills from the Programme. (Paragraph 307)
30. The Programme also provides an opportunity to engage with businesses, especially SMEs beyond London and the south-east of England. We recommend that the Sponsor Board and Delivery Authority begin market engagement early, and ensure that such engagement reaches out as widely as possible. (Paragraph 308)
31. In restoring the Palace of Westminster, Parliament should ensure that it is an exemplar in following the protective regimes and regulations it has agreed for others. However, the R&R Programme will be a large and complex project, involving a

nationally significant building in the middle of a UNESCO World Heritage Site. The need to protect and conserve the building must be balanced against the requirement to modernise it for a 21st Century Parliament and its public. Parliament could legislate to become its own planning authority, though that might not be the preferred approach. We therefore recommend that officials in both Houses should begin engagement and consultation with Westminster City Council, Historic England and other interested bodies on the ways in which planning issues could be addressed throughout the Programme. (Paragraph 313)

32. In order to guide the consultation and engagement with Westminster City Council, Historic England and others, we recommend the following key principles for the R&R Programme:

- Planning issues should be addressed strategically, based on a clear vision of the national significance of the Palace of Westminster as the home of Parliament and part of a World Heritage Site.
- The planning process should be streamlined as much as possible to mitigate the risks of uncertainty, delay and additional cost.
- The planning process should involve full and open consultation with relevant national and local bodies and with individuals.
- The planning process should be designed to encourage creative and appropriate design solutions. (Paragraph 314)

Appendix 1: Members and interests

Members

Baroness Stowell of Beeston (Co-Chairman)	Chris Grayling MP (Co-Chairman)
Lord Carter of Coles	Chris Bryant MP
Lord Deighton	Neil Gray MP
Lord Laming	Ian Paisley MP
Baroness Smith of Basildon	Mr Jacob Rees-Mogg MP
Lord Wallace of Tankerness	Mark Tami MP

Declarations of interest

Lord Carter of Coles

Chair of Her Majesty's Government's Property Advisory Panel.

Co-author of Operational Efficiency Programme: final report, published in April 2009, which led to the establishment of the Government Property Unit.

Lord Deighton

Declared an interest in respect of James Bulley, the Specialist Adviser to the Joint Committee, who had worked for him for seven years at the London Organising Committee of the Olympic and Paralympic Games.

Baroness Smith of Basildon

President of Youthbuild UK.

Baroness Stowell of Beeston

Declared an interest in respect of Penny Young, Librarian and Director General of Information Services, House of Commons, who she had previously worked with at the BBC, and who is a personal friend.

A full list of members' interests can be found in the Register of Lords' Interests: <http://www.parliament.uk/mps-lords-and-offices/standards-and-interests/register-of-lords-interests/> and in the House of Commons Register of Members' Financial Interests: <http://www.parliament.uk/mps-lords-and-offices/standards-and-financial-interests/parliamentary-commissioner-for-standards/register-of-interests/register-of-members-financial-interests/>

James Bulley OBE FRICS, Specialist Adviser, declared that he had previously worked on a bid for the contract to conduct the Independent Options Appraisal (IOA). The consortium involved in the bid withdrew part way through the tendering process. Mr Bulley had had no further involvement with the Restoration and Renewal Programme before being appointed as Specialist Adviser.

Appendix 2: Call for Evidence

The following Call for Evidence was issued by the Committee on 30 November 2015:

Background

The Joint Committee on the Palace of Westminster, co-chaired by the Leader of the House of Commons and the Leader of the House of Lords, was appointed by the two Houses of Parliament in July 2015 to consider the restoration and renewal of the Palace of Westminster. The Committee's main task is to make a recommendation to both Houses about the best way to approach the Restoration and Renewal Programme, a major programme of repair and conservation which is intended to start during the 2020 Parliament.

The Palace of Westminster is one of the most important and recognisable buildings in the world. It is a Grade I listed building and, with Westminster Abbey and St Margaret's Church, forms part of a UNESCO World Heritage Site. It is also home to one of the busiest parliaments in the world, with more than a million people, including 70,000 schoolchildren, passing through its doors each year.

In October 2012, a Report published by the House of Commons Commission and the House of Lords House Committee indicated that, unless significant conservation work were to be undertaken, major, irreversible damage could be done to the building.¹⁶⁹ In order to protect the heritage of the Palace for future generations and to ensure that it can continue as the home of the UK Parliament, the governing bodies of both Houses agreed that doing nothing was not an option. They also ruled out building a new Parliamentary building away from Westminster.

At the end of 2013, the House of Commons Commission and the House of Lords House Committee commissioned a consortium led by Deloitte Real Estate to undertake an independent appraisal of the options for carrying out the Restoration and Renewal Programme. The Independent Options Appraisal was published on 18 June 2015.¹⁷⁰ The Independent Options Appraisal explores a range of scenarios for restoring and renewing the Palace of Westminster, combining potential improvements (ranging from minimum requirements to substantial improvements) with different Delivery Options.¹⁷¹ The Independent Options Appraisal is informing the Joint Committee's work, though the Committee is now exploring a range of possible options for the way forward.

The Committee's inquiry

The Committee's task at this stage is to make recommendations in two areas:

- a) **The broad scope of the work to be carried out.** The proposed work includes replacement of the building's mechanical and electrical plant, improved fire-safety measures, conservation of the external stonework, and conservation of the heritage fabric of the interior of the building. There is the potential to go further, and deliver

¹⁶⁹ [Restoration and Renewal of the Palace of Westminster: pre-feasibility study and preliminary strategic business case.](#)

¹⁷⁰ A [brief summary](#) of the Independent Options Appraisal is available online.

¹⁷¹ Further information on the Independent Options Appraisal and the Restoration and Renewal Programme can be found online: <http://www.restorationandrenewal.parliament.uk/index.html>

long-term improvements which make the Palace more accessible, provide better visitor facilities and have the potential to enable the building to be used more efficiently.

- b) **How the work should be delivered.** Whether Parliament should remain on site for the duration of the works (which would take several decades) or whether to relocate some or all of the functions of Parliament temporarily to another location in central London and aim to complete the work in a shorter period.

As a first stage in its inquiry, the Committee is seeking views on these two strategic issues. The Committee will not be looking at detailed designs for the restored Palace of Westminster.

The Committee's approach to this task is driven by three principles: to preserve the heritage of the Palace of Westminster as the home of the UK Parliament for future generations, to deliver value-for-money for the taxpayer, and to continue the effective functioning of Parliament whilst work is happening. The Committee's decision will also be informed by an understanding of the current security climate.

Attached are two sets of questions: the first aimed primarily at members of the public and interested groups (such as conservation bodies); and the second aimed primarily at MPs, Peers and other people who work in or regularly visit the Palace of Westminster. The questions are intended to direct respondents towards the areas where the Committee feels they will be able to make the most valuable contribution, but respondents are free to address either set of questions or both. Please note that questions are not listed in any particular order of importance.

Questions aimed primarily at members of the public and interested groups

A: Scope

- 1) What changes could be made to the Palace of Westminster in order to improve public engagement with the work of Parliament and to improve accessibility?
- 2) What opportunities or benefits do you think a major restoration and renewal programme could present for Parliament and the wider public?

B: Delivery

- 3) How should the heritage of the Palace of Westminster be conserved and safeguarded, while recognising that it is home to a busy working Parliament with regular public access?
- 4) What will be the major risks or challenges in delivering a Programme of this scale and how should they be addressed?

Questions aimed primarily at MPs, Peers, staff and other people who work in the Palace, or visit regularly

A: Scope

- 5) Would you like to see any changes made to the Palace of Westminster as part of the work? If so, what would those changes be?
- 6) What do you think should not be changed as part of the Palace of Westminster restoration and renewal?
- 7) How can the restoration and renewal of the Palace of Westminster support the work of Parliament and parliamentarians? What changes do you think are required to the building to adapt to Parliament's changing needs in the 21st century?
- 8) Are there any changes which would help to improve the way in which you work in the Palace of Westminster?
- 9) Could the restoration and renewal of the Palace of Westminster make it easier for the public to be welcomed into the Palace and to see and participate in the work of Parliament? If so, in what ways could this be achieved?
- 10) What are your observations on the current condition of the Palace of Westminster?

B: Delivery

- 11) What, in your view, would be the most appropriate means to deliver the changes which you would like to see made to the Palace of Westminster?
- 12) Are there any services which are currently located in the Palace of Westminster which, in your view, need not be co-located with the Chambers during any potential decant period?

Appendix 3: Glossary of terms and abbreviations

CIBSE	Chartered Institution of Building Services Engineers
IOA	Independent Options Appraisal
ICE	Institution of Civil Engineers
M&E	Mechanical and Electrical
NEP	Northern Estate Programme
R&R	Restoration and Renewal
RIBA	Royal Institute of British Architects
RICS	Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors
SMEs	Small and Medium-sized Enterprises

Formal Minutes

Monday 5 September 2016

Members present:

Baroness Stowell of Beeston, in the Chair

Lord Carter of Coles	Chris Bryant MP
Lord Deighton	Neil Gray MP
Lord Laming	Chris Grayling MP (Co-Chairman)
Baroness Smith of Basildon	Ian Paisley MP
Baroness Stowell of Beeston (Co-Chairman)	Mr Jacob Rees-Mogg MP
Lord Wallace of Tankerness	Mark Tami MP

1. Restoration and Renewal of the Palace of Westminster

Draft Report (*Restoration and Renewal of the Palace of Westminster*), proposed by the Chairmen, brought up and read.

Question proposed, That the draft Report be read a second time, paragraph by paragraph.

Amendment proposed, to leave out from “That” to the end and add “the Joint Committee declines to consider a draft Report until it has given full consideration to the possibility of constructing a permanent new Parliamentary building, while finding an alternative future use for the Palace of Westminster; notes that this option was included in the Pre-Feasibility Study and Preliminary Strategic Business Case published in October 2012 but was rejected by the House of Commons Commission and the House of Lords House Committee at that stage; and resolves to apply the same rigorous scrutiny to the possible construction of a new Parliamentary building as it has applied to the other options for delivering the Restoration and Renewal Programme, before making a recommendation about the best option for carrying out the works.”—(*Neil Gray.*)

Question put, That the Amendment be made.

The Committee divided.

Contents, 1	Not-Contents, 11
Neil Gray	Chris Bryant
	Lord Carter of Coles
	Lord Deighton
	Chris Grayling
	Lord Laming
	Ian Paisley
	Mr Jacob Rees-Mogg
	Baroness Smith of Basildon
	Baroness Stowell of Beeston
	Mark Tami
	Lord Wallace of Tankerness

Amendment accordingly disagreed to.

Ordered, That the draft Report be read a second time, paragraph by paragraph.

Paragraphs 1 to 318 read and agreed to.

Summary agreed to.

Appendices to the Report agreed to.

Resolved, That the Report be the Report of the Committee to both Houses.

Ordered, That Baroness Stowell of Beeston make the Report to the House of Lords and Chris Grayling make the Report to the House of Commons.

Written evidence was ordered to be reported.

Ordered, That embargoed copies of the Report be made available, in accordance with the provisions of Standing Order No. 134 of the House of Commons.

The Committee adjourned *sine die*

Witnesses

The following witnesses gave evidence. Transcripts can be viewed on the [inquiry publications page](#) of the Committee's website.

Monday 29 February 2016

Question number

Tony Grew, Honorary Secretary, and **Craig Woodhouse**, Chairman, Parliamentary Press Gallery

[Q 1–24](#)

The Rt Hon Lord Butler of Brockwell KG GCB CVO, and **The Rt Hon Peter Riddell CBE**, Director, Institute for Government

[Q 25–37](#)

Professor Jonathan Drori CBE, Chairman, Speaker's Advisory Council on Public Engagement, **Geoff Mulgan**, Chief Executive, Nesta, and **Penny Young**, Librarian and Director General, Information Services, House of Commons, and Chair of the Parliamentary Visitors Group

[Q 38–54](#)

Monday 7 March 2016

Hugh Feilden, Chair of the Conservation Advisory Group, Royal Institute of British Architects, **David Hirst**, Chair of the Management Panel, Institution of Civil Engineers, **Lynda Jubb**, Chair of the Building Conservation Forum, Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors, and **Nick Mead**, President, Chartered Institution of Building Services Engineers

[Q 55–97](#)

Informal briefings

The following people gave informal oral briefings to the Committee:

Ian Ailles, Director General, House of Commons

David Beamish, Clerk of the Parliaments, House of Lords

William Beattie, IOA Business Case and Evaluation Lead, Deloitte

Alex Bell, IOA Consortium Lead, Deloitte

John Borley CB, Director General of Facilities, House of Commons

Dr Lisa Cameron MP, Chair, All-Party Parliamentary Group for Disability

Philip Connolly, Policy and Development Manager, Disability Rights UK and Secretary of the All-Party Parliamentary Group for Disability

Christopher Costelloe, Director, The Victorian Society

Jonathan Deans, Partner, Gardiner and Theobald

Brian Finnimore, Parliamentary Director of Estates

James Gray, Head of Project & Building Consultancy, Cluttons LLP

Baroness Grey-Thompson DBE, Vice-President of ParliAble and Officer of the All-Party Parliamentary Group for Disability

Liz Hallam Smith, Director of Information Services and Librarian, House of Lords

Mike Hamer, IOA Technical Lead, AECOM

Rt Hon Matthew Hancock MP, Minister for the Cabinet Office and Paymaster General

Stuart Johnston, IOA Cost Lead, AECOM

Michael Kell, Chief Economist, National Audit Office

The Earl of Kinnoull

Paul Martin CBE, Parliamentary Security Director

Sir Amyas Morse KCB, Comptroller and Auditor General, National Audit Office

David Natzler, Clerk of the House, House of Commons

David Orr CBE, External member of the Restoration and Renewal Programme Board

Tim Parkin, member of the Restoration and Renewal Programme Team

Andrew Piper, member of the Restoration and Renewal Programme Team

Jason Prior, IOA Vision and Masterplan Lead, AECOM

Alan Robson, Senior Partner, Feilden and Mawson

Baroness Thomas of Winchester MBE, Member of ParliAble and Officer of the All-Party Parliamentary Group for Disability

Aileen Walker, Director of Public Engagement, House of Commons

Dr Richard Ware, Director of the Restoration and Renewal Programme

David Waterhouse, IOA MEP Engineering Lead, AECOM

Emma Wharton, member of the Restoration and Renewal Programme Team

Alan Whitelaw, Head of Corporate Real Estate, Cluttons LLP

Duncan Wilson OBE, Chief Executive, Historic England

Jennifer Wood, External member of the Restoration and Renewal Programme Board

Carl Woodall, Director of Facilities, House of Lords

Penny Young, Librarian and Director General of Information Services, House of Commons

The following people took Committee Members on tours:

Tessa Blundy, Assistant Architect and Deputy Head of Architecture and Heritage, Parliamentary Estates Directorate (tours of the Palace of Westminster)

Tony Grew, Honorary Secretary, Parliamentary Press Gallery (tours of the Parliamentary Press Gallery)

Robert Hutton, Honorary Treasurer, Parliamentary Press Gallery (tours of the Parliamentary Press Gallery)

Andy Piper, member of the Restoration and Renewal Programme Team (tours of the Palace of Westminster basements)

Richard Ware, Director of the Restoration and Renewal Programme (tours of the Palace of Westminster)

Adam Watrobski, Principal Architect and Head of Architecture and Heritage, Parliamentary Estates Directorate (tours of the Palace of Westminster)

Emma Wharton, member of the Restoration and Renewal Programme Team (tours of Richmond House)

Craig Woodhouse, Chairman, Parliamentary Press Gallery (tours of the Parliamentary Press Gallery)

Staff at the Department of Health (tours of Richmond House)

Published written evidence

The following written evidence was received and can be viewed on the [inquiry publications page](#) of the Committee's website.

INQ numbers are generated by the evidence processing system and so may not be complete.

- 1 Kolly Ajao ([RAR0060](#))
- 2 All-Party Parliamentary Group on Archaeology ([RAR0046](#))
- 3 Jacqueline Baker ([RAR0050](#))
- 4 Alan Baxter Ltd ([RAR0055](#))
- 5 Alex Bird ([RAR0010](#))
- 6 Simon Blackburn ([RAR0045](#))
- 7 Lord Bowness CBE DL ([RAR0048](#))
- 8 Steve Brine MP ([RAR0013](#))
- 9 British Group of the Inter-Parliamentary Union ([RAR0028](#))
- 10 Chartered Institution of Building Services Engineers ([RAR0063](#)) ([RAR0066](#))
- 11 Professor Sarah Childs ([RAR0031](#))
- 12 Commonwealth Parliamentary Association UK Executive Committee ([RAR0034](#))
- 13 Compass Group UK & Ireland ([RAR0067](#))
- 14 Philip Connolly ([RAR0047](#))
- 15 The Rt Hon Lord Cope of Berkeley ([RAR0009](#))
- 16 Simon Cramp ([RAR0062](#))
- 17 Baroness Deech DBE ([RAR0011](#))
- 18 Jonathan Djanogly MP ([RAR0001](#))
- 19 Caroline Emery ([RAR0004](#))
- 20 Harry Fenton ([RAR0058](#))
- 21 Professor Matthew Flinders and Dr Leanne-Marie McCarthy-Cotter, The Sir Bernard Crick Centre for the Public Understanding of Politics, University Of Sheffield ([RAR0006](#))
- 22 Oonagh Gay OBE ([RAR0020](#))
- 23 James Heapey MP ([RAR0068](#))
- 24 Sir Michael Hopkins ([RAR0037](#))
- 25 Institution of Civil Engineers ([RAR0042](#))
- 26 Conor Jackson ([RAR0026](#))
- 27 The Earl of Kinnoull ([RAR0049](#))
- 28 Graham Lang ([RAR0015](#))
- 29 Lord Leigh of Hurley ([RAR0043](#))
- 30 Lord Lucas ([RAR0005](#))
- 31 Susanna Lumsden ([RAR0061](#))
- 32 The Earl of Lytton ([RAR0008](#))
- 33 Andrew Makower ([RAR0014](#))

- 34 Master Carvers' Association ([RAR0017](#))
- 35 Kirsty McCullagh ([RAR0024](#))
- 36 Microsoft Ltd ([RAR0057](#))
- 37 Roger Mullin MP ([RAR0021](#))
- 38 National Federation of Roofing Contractors ([RAR0041](#))
- 39 National Heritage Training Group ([RAR0038](#))
- 40 Nesta ([RAR0025](#))
- 41 Nichols Group ([RAR0022](#))
- 42 Baroness Nicholson of Winterbourne ([RAR0029](#))
- 43 Jesse Norman MP ([RAR0032](#))
- 44 Overseas Offices of the House of Commons and House of Lords ([RAR0051](#))
- 45 Christine Owen ([RAR0018](#))
- 46 Parliamentary Press Gallery ([RAR0019](#)) ([RAR0064](#))
- 47 Parliamentary Visitors Group ([RAR0059](#))
- 48 Jonathan Prew ([RAR0027](#))
- 49 Pupils 2 Parliament ([RAR0016](#))
- 50 John Redwood MP ([RAR0003](#))
- 51 Dame Fiona Reynolds DBE ([RAR0054](#))
- 52 Royal Institute of British Architects ([RAR0035](#))
- 53 Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors ([RAR0052](#))
- 54 SNP Westminster Parliamentary Group ([RAR0044](#))
- 55 Speaker's Advisory Council on Public Engagement ([RAR0030](#))
- 56 Baroness Thomas of Winchester MBE ([RAR0056](#))
- 57 Trade Union Side, House of Commons ([RAR0023](#))
- 58 Unite Parliamentary Staff Branch ([RAR0036](#))
- 59 The Rt Hon Lord Wallace of Saltaire ([RAR0007](#))
- 60 David Watkinson ([RAR0012](#))
- 61 Women and Equalities Committee, House of Commons ([RAR0065](#))
- 62 Mark Wyman and Cara Clark ([RAR0040](#))

Unpublished written evidence

The following written evidence was received but has not been published for reasons of commercial confidentiality.

- 63 Simon Hughes, Non-Executive Director of the Management Board, Queen Elizabeth II Conference Centre
- 64 Management Board of the Queen Elizabeth II Conference Centre

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