

Research Briefing

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Restoration and Renewal: Developing the strategic case

Summary

- 1 A new approach to Restoration and Renewal
- 2 Development and assessment of new options

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Summary

A major refurbishment programme is needed to protect and preserve the heritage of the Palace of Westminster and ensure it can continue as the home of UK Parliament. The [Restoration and Renewal Programme](#) was established by Parliament to undertake this work. In 2019 legislation established the Parliamentary Works Sponsor Body to oversee the Programme.

In 2022 a new approach to the works was proposed by the Commissions of the two Houses of Parliament and endorsed by both Houses.

A new approach to the restoration and renewal of the Palace of Westminster

Initial estimates of the cost and duration of the Restoration and Renewal Programme were presented to the Commissions of the two Houses of Parliament in January 2022, by the programme's Sponsor Body. It was estimated to cost £7 billion to £13 billion, taking 19–28 years, with a decant lasting 12–20 years.

The Sponsor Body was established by statute to set the strategic direction of the project, provide leadership and governance, liaise with parliamentarians and other stakeholders, monitor performance and prepare the business case for the work.

The Commissions were concerned about both the costs and duration of the programme. During 2022 they proposed, and the two Houses endorsed, a new approach to undertaking the work.

The Sponsor Body was abolished and its functions were transferred to the Corporate Officers (the Clerks) of the two Houses. Staff of the Sponsor Body were transferred to a new joint department of the two Houses, to support the Corporate Officers in their new functions.

Both Houses also endorsed a proposal from the two Commissions that they, meeting as a [Client Board](#), would be “responsible for making critical strategic choices and recommendations relating to the restoration and renewal of the Palace of Westminster”.

The Client Board was to be advised by a separate [Programme Board](#), comprising members of both Houses, officials and independent members with relevant expertise in major programmes.

The two Commissions' proposals were set out in a joint report, [Restoration and Renewal of the Palace of Westminster – a new mandate](#) (PDF), from June 2022. Both Houses endorsed the recommendations in July 2022.

The two Houses were subsequently asked to approve a statutory instrument that abolished the Sponsor Body and transferred its functions to the Corporate Officers of the two Houses of Parliament. The [Parliamentary Works Sponsor Body \(Abolition\) Regulations 2022](#) came into force on 1 January 2023.

Development and assessment of new options

Following Parliament's agreement for a new approach to the Restoration and Renewal Programme, the Delivery Authority (the body responsible for undertaking the restoration and renewal work) began "[taking forward a wide range of options for the new approach to the works](#)" (PDF).

In their [annual progress report on Restoration and Renewal](#), published in July 2023, the Corporate Officers of the two Houses summarised how the Delivery Authority approached the task of developing new options:

The Delivery Authority has developed a wide range of options for restoration and renewal of the Palace which set out various methods of restoring the Palace as well as a spectrum of levels of ambition for the outcomes that could be achieved. Six outcome levels for the scope of works (the 'what') were developed alongside six representative construction scenarios (the 'how'). Combining each of the outcome levels with each of the construction scenarios has led to the production of thirty-six delivery options.

The shortlisted options

At its meeting on 20 June 2023, the Programme Board agreed that the two Houses should be [presented with two construction options](#) (PDF). One would involve a decant of the Palace of Westminster and the other would allow a continued presence. The shortlist it recommended to the Client Board was:

- a full decant and phased return (Construction Scenario C)
- a continuous presence option, "under which the House of Commons Chamber would remain within the Palace, but may temporarily be required to sit in the Lords Chamber (subject to the Lords agreement)" (Construction Scenario F)

Under both construction scenarios, the same outcome would be delivered: "Outcome Level 4", which had been [agreed at the Programme Board's meeting on 5 June 2023](#) (PDF).

In his foreword to the [Quarterly Report: Restoration and Renewal of the Houses of Parliament, covering July to September 2023](#) (PDF), Nigel Evans, the Chair of the Programme Board, wrote:

... we unanimously agreed to shortlist one outcome level with delivery through two potential construction scenarios - one “full decant” option where both Houses move out of the Palace at the same time (with one House, assumed to be the Commons, prioritised for return) and one “continued presence” option where the House of Commons Chamber business would remain in the Palace. In doing so we considered speed, safety, and value for money.

In July 2023 the Client Board [endorsed the Programme Board’s recommended shortlist of the two delivery options](#). The Client Board also “requested that a fallback option of enhanced maintenance and improvement forms part of further detailed design work on these options to inform a decision on the preferred way forward in due course”.

At its meeting in November 2023, the Client Board asked parliamentary officials for a more comprehensive description of work on the ‘enhanced maintenance and improvement’ option so that when MPs consider the costed proposals they have more information.

Temporary accommodation

On 20 June 2023, the Programme Board “[provisionally agreed that the QEII Conference Centre remains the preferred decant location for the House of Lords](#)” (PDF). The conference centre is close to the Palace of Westminster on Broad Sanctuary.

At its meeting on 24 October 2023, the Programme Board agreed that [Richmond House should be recommended to the Client Board as the preferred location for any House of Commons temporary Chamber for the full decant delivery option](#) (PDF).

The Programme Board also agreed that temporary accommodation on the northern part of the parliamentary estate to support a contingency House of Commons Chamber should be considered for the continued presence delivery option.

Further information on the R&R Programme

Previous Library research briefings provide more detail on the background to the R&R Programme; the passage of the legislation that established the current governance framework; and the developments that have taken place since the Act was passed:

- [Restoration and Renewal of the Palace of Westminster](#) (December 2018)
- [Parliamentary Buildings \(Restoration and Renewal\) Bill 2017-19](#) (September 2019)

- [Restoration and Renewal - developments since October 2019](#) (April 2022)
- [Restoration and Renewal: A new approach to governance arrangements](#) (January 2024)

1 A new approach to Restoration and Renewal

A major refurbishment programme is needed to protect and preserve the heritage of the Palace of Westminster and ensure it can continue to serve as home to the UK Parliament. The [Restoration and Renewal Programme](#) has been established to undertake this work.

In 2018, both Houses of Parliament agreed the work was necessary and that it should be overseen by a statutory Sponsor Body and undertaken by a separate Delivery Authority.

The [Parliamentary Buildings \(Restoration and Renewal\) Act 2019](#) set up the two bodies and defined their roles and governance arrangements. The Sponsor Body included MPs, members of the House of Lords and external members.

In January 2022, the Commissions of the House of Lords and the House of Commons received an initial assessment of the cost and schedule of the Restoration and Renewal project from the Sponsor Body. It was published in February 2022.¹

The House of Commons Commission expressed concern about the cost and schedule presented in the initial assessment,² estimated to be £7 billion to £13 billion, taking 19–28 years, with a decant lasting 12–20 years.³ The House of Lords Commission expressed concern about the potential overall length of the decant period and asked for options to shorten it to be explored.⁴ The House of Commons Commission suggested replacing the Sponsor Body with a new department of both Houses.

On 17 March 2022, the two Commissions met jointly and agreed to seek independent advice and assurance on a different approach to the Restoration and Renewal Programme. They issued a joint statement on 18 March. They agreed a new approach to the programme and set out what would guide it:

Following discussions, the Commission members agreed the new approach would be guided by the following parameters:

¹ Parliamentary Works Sponsor Body, [Essential Scheme: Initial Assessment of Cost and Schedule; and Continued Presence: Impact Study](#) (PDF), February 2022

² House of Commons Commission, [Minutes, 24 January 2022](#) (PDF), Item 4

³ Parliamentary Works Sponsor Body, [Essential Scheme: Initial Assessment of Cost and Schedule; and Continued Presence: Impact Study](#) (PDF), February 2022, Executive Summary, para 8

⁴ House of Lords Commission, [Minutes, 17 January 2022](#) (PDF), Item 3

- a) A primary commitment to health and safety, including fire safety;
- b) Ensuring lessons from previous project activity are embedded in future project activity;
- c) Works to improve mechanical, electrical and other essential systems should be prioritised;
- d) A shorter life expectancy for the completed works should be considered (i.e. the infrastructure might require further renewal or ongoing upgrades in future decades rather than the current underpinning assumption to avoid this);
- e) A wider range of options to decant Members and staff from areas of the building affected by the works needs to be considered;
- f) There must be a more integrated and cohesive approach between R&R works and other critical works on the Parliamentary estate;
- g) Different levels of ambition for programme scope should be considered to ensure maximum value for money;
- h) There should be a broader range and a greater number of options for delivering the works developed prior to down-selection of final options;
- i) An incremental approach to the works and the funding should be considered, in line with standard practice for many major public works.

The Commission members agreed to seek independent advice and assurance on the new approach to the works, as well as on proposals to take forward the Commissions' decisions to replace the Sponsor Body. They also asked the Delivery Authority to place a high priority on continuing with the already planned programme of intrusive surveys, and other necessary work to inform future decisions, as swiftly as possible.

A revised mandate for the works and changes to the sponsorship function will be sought from the two Houses, which is currently planned to take place before the summer recess.⁵

On 14 June 2022, the House of Lords Commission and the House of Commons Commission published a joint report, [Restoration and Renewal of the Palace of Westminster – a new mandate](#) (PDF).⁶ It set out their proposals for a new mandate for the R&R Programme and a new governance structure to oversee the programme definition phase.

In this report, the two Commissions also proposed which elements of the works should have priority:

⁵ House of Commons Commission, [Joint statement from the House of Commons and the House of Lords Commissions](#), 18 March 2022

⁶ House of Lords Commission and House of Commons Commission, [Restoration and Renewal of the Palace of Westminster – a new mandate](#) (PDF), 14 June 2022, HC 399 2022-23

the programme should initially focus on the following priority work areas:

- Fire safety and protection
- Building services
- Asbestos
- Building fabric conservation⁷

1.1

Decisions for the two Houses

The two Houses were first asked to endorse the recommendations of the two Commissions and approve the establishment of the Client Team (as a joint department of the two Houses). The two Houses agreed to this in July 2022:

- The House of Commons debated and agreed the report on 12 July 2022.⁸
- The House of Lords debated and agreed the report on 13 July 2022.⁹

Both Houses agreed:

That this House:

reaffirms its commitment to preserving the Palace of Westminster for future generations and ensuring the safety of all those who work in and visit the Palace, now and in the future;

notwithstanding the Resolution of 31 January 2018, welcomes the report from the House of Commons and House of Lords Commissions proposing a new mandate for the Restoration and Renewal works and a new governance structure to support them;

accordingly endorses the recommendations set out in the Commissions' report; and

in consequence, approves the establishment of a joint department of the two Houses, under the terms of the Parliament (Joint Departments) Act 2007.

The two Houses were subsequently asked to approve a statutory instrument that abolished the Sponsor Body and transferred its functions to the Corporate Officers of the two Houses of Parliament. The draft Parliamentary Works Sponsor Body (Abolition) Regulations 2022 were approved by the House of Commons on 13 December 2022 and by the House of Lords on 14 December 2022, following debates on earlier days.

⁷ House of Lords Commission and House of Commons Commission, [Restoration and Renewal of the Palace of Westminster – a new mandate](#) (PDF), 14 June 2022, HC 399 2022-23 , para 20

⁸ [HC Deb 12 July 2022 cc271-301](#)

⁹ [HL Deb 13 July 2022 cc1497-1548](#)

The [Parliamentary Works Sponsor Body \(Abolition\) Regulations 2022](#) (SI 2022/1360) came into force on 1 January 2023.

1.2 The new governance structure

The Parliamentary Works Sponsor Body (Abolition) Regulations 2022 transferred the statutory responsibilities of the Sponsor Body to the Corporate Officers of the two Houses of Parliament. Separately, the Corporate Officers created a new joint department of the two Houses, the Client Team.

Sir John Benger, the former Clerk of the House of Commons, told the Public Accounts Committee about the responsibilities that were being assumed and the role of the Client Team:

We have assumed all sorts of significant responsibilities that were formerly the responsibility of the Sponsor Board. They include some really big things, such as engagement, strategic direction and so forth. ... The Client Team, in whom I have great confidence, supports both of us in that role, and that is really important.¹⁰

Many of the staff of the Client Team transferred into the joint department from the Sponsor Body.

The Client Team also supports the Programme's governance bodies, the R&R Client Board and R&R Programme Board, to set the strategic direction of the Programme and to produce and gain approval for a business case for the delivery of the Programme.

The Client Board is a board comprising the members of the Commissions of the two Houses. It is responsible for making critical strategic choices and recommendations relating to the restoration and renewal of the Palace of Westminster.¹¹

The Programme Board's website provides the following description of its composition and functions:

The R&R Programme Board is made up of members of both Houses; the Clerk of the House of Commons and the Clerk of the House of Lords; and lay members, with the right skills and expertise, particularly in major programmes, to fulfil its remit. The R&R Programme Board is responsible to direct and have oversight of the restoration and renewal of the Palace of Westminster. The R&R Programme Board will engage, inform, mediate and translate between Parliament and the independent Delivery Authority, which remains responsible for delivering the works specified by Parliament. See the Delivery Authority's webpages for more details about this organisation.¹²

¹⁰ Public Accounts Committee, [Oral evidence: Restoration and Renewal Recall](#) (PDF), 2 February 2023, HC 1021 2022-23, Q64

¹¹ R&R Client Board, [About the R&R Client Board](#)

¹² R&R Programme Board, [About the R&R Programme Board](#)

2 Development and assessment of new options

2.1 Preparing and undertaking the building works

Following the two Houses' decisions to endorse the recommendations from the two Commissions for a new approach to R&R, the Delivery Authority began "taking forward a wide range of options for the new approach to the works".¹³

The statutory requirements for initiating the building works have not changed. The functions that were originally given to the Sponsor Body have been transferred to the Corporate Officers of the two Houses but not changed.

The Parliamentary Buildings (Restoration and Renewal) Act 2019 provides for there to be two phases of work:

Phase 1 – preparatory work to develop a scheme

Phase 2 – Parliamentary building works, from approval of the works, by both Houses of Parliament, until the works are complete

In her foreword to the July 2023 [Restoration and Renewal: Annual Progress Report](#) (PDF), Patsy Richards, Interim Managing Director of the Client Team, explained:

Phase 1 is the current design phase which will culminate in a fully costed proposal for the works being presented to the Houses for approval.¹⁴

At its first meeting, on 17 October 2022, the Client Board was informed of and endorsed "the framework and process for developing a shortlist of options that would lead to the strategic case due by the end of 2023".¹⁵

The **Strategic Case** that will be agreed by the Client Board and presented to both Houses will set out the shortlist and describe how the shortlist was arrived at.

Alongside the Strategic Case, there will be a Strategic Outline Case. It will be a technical document underpinning the strategic case that has been produced in line with HM Treasury Green Book guidance. It will be deposited

¹³ R&R Client Board, [Minutes](#) (PDF), 17 October 2022, Item 2

¹⁴ [Restoration and Renewal: Annual Progress Report](#) (PDF), July 2023, HC 1603 2022-23, p8

¹⁵ R&R Client Board, [Minutes](#) (PDF), 17 October 2022, Item 5

in the Libraries of both Houses and available before the debate on the Strategic Case.¹⁶

The development of the Strategic Case is one part of the preparatory work. If it is approved by the two Houses, work will then begin on the producing more detailed costings (previously referred to as the Outline Business Case).

Under the Parliamentary Buildings (Restoration and Renewal) Act 2019, before Phase 2 works can be begin, the two Houses have to approve what is proposed and a funding envelope:

- (a) Delivery Authority proposals in respect of those works, and
- (b) funding, up to an amount specified in the approval resolution, in respect of phase two works.¹⁷

When the Bill that became the Act was being debated at second reading, on 21 May 2019, Andrea Leadsom, then the Leader of the House of Commons, expected the two Houses would be asked to approve the Outline Business Case “during 2021”.¹⁸

Now, a decision on the preferred way forward is expected in 2025.¹⁹

Developing the strategic case

In their annual progress report on R&R, published in July 2023, the Corporate Officers of the two Houses summarised how the Delivery Authority approached the task of developing the Strategic Case:

The Delivery Authority has developed a wide range of options for restoration and renewal of the Palace which set out various methods of restoring the Palace as well as a spectrum of levels of ambition for the outcomes that could be achieved. Six outcome levels for the scope of works (the ‘what’) were developed alongside six representative construction scenarios (the ‘how’). Combining each of the outcome levels with each of the construction scenarios has led to the production of thirty-six delivery options.²⁰

At its second meeting, in November 2022, the Client Board agreed milestones for this work.²¹ The milestones and progress against them have been reported in the Programme Board’s quarterly reports and in the Corporate Officers’ annual progress report.²²

¹⁶ Programme Board, [Minutes](#) (PDF), 24 October 2023, Item 6

¹⁷ Parliamentary Buildings (Restoration and Renewal) Act 2019 (chapter 27), [section 7](#)

¹⁸ [HC Deb 21 May 2019 c639](#)

¹⁹ [HLPO458](#), 29 November 2023

²⁰ The Corporate Officer of the House of Commons and the Corporate Officer of the House of Lords, [Restoration and Renewal: Annual Progress Report 2023](#) (PDF), 19 July 2023. HC 1603 2022-23, p14

²¹ R&R Client Board, [Minutes](#) (PDF), 7 November 2022, Item 4

²² UK Parliament, [Quarterly Report: Restoration and Renewal of the Houses of Parliament - January to March 2023](#) (PDF), 6 June 2023; [Quarterly Report: Restoration and Renewal of the Houses of](#)

In December 2022, the Client Board said it expected the Programme Board to submit a shortlist of options to it by June 2023.²³

The shortlist would be submitted to the Client Board for its endorsement, as encapsulated in the milestone:

R&R Options Shortlist, Strategic Objectives and vision endorsed by the Client Board

This shortlist of options along with strategic objectives and a vision will be part of the strategic case brought back to the Houses at the end of 2023.²⁴

2.2 The shortlisted options

At its meeting on 20 June 2023, the Programme Board agreed that the two Houses “should be presented with a decant and a continued presence option at this stage”.²⁵

The shortlist it recommended to the Client Board was:

- Construction Scenario C - a full decant and phased return
- Construction Scenario F – a continuous presence option, “under which the House of Commons Chamber would remain within the Palace, but may temporarily be required to sit in the Lords Chamber (subject to the Lords agreement)”.²⁶

Under both construction scenarios, the same outcome for R&R would be delivered. Outcome Level 4 had been agreed at the Programme Board’s meeting on 5 June 2023.²⁷

In his foreword to the Quarterly Report: Restoration and Renewal of the Houses of Parliament, covering July to September 2023, Nigel Evans, the Chair of the Programme Board, wrote:

... we unanimously agreed to shortlist one outcome level with delivery through two potential construction scenarios - one “full decant” option where both Houses move out of the Palace at the same time (with one House, assumed to be the Commons, prioritised for return) and one “continued presence” option

[Parliament - April to June 2023](#) (PDF), 19 July 2023; [Quarterly Report: Restoration and Renewal of the Houses of Parliament - July to September 2023](#) (PDF), 6 November 2023; and The Corporate Officer of the House of Commons and the Corporate Officer of the House of Lords, [Restoration and Renewal: Annual Progress Report 2023](#) (PDF), 19 July 2023.HC 1603 2022-23

²³ R&R Client Board, [Minutes](#) (PDF), 19 December 2022, Item 3

²⁴ The Corporate Officer of the House of Commons and the Corporate Officer of the House of Lords, [Restoration and Renewal: Annual Progress Report 2023](#) (PDF), 19 July 2023.HC 1603 2022-23, p27

²⁵ Programme Board, [Minutes](#) (PDF), 20 June 2023, Item 4

²⁶ Programme Board, [Minutes](#) (PDF), 20 June 2023, Item 4

²⁷ Programme Board, [Minutes](#) (PDF), 5 June 2023, Item 5

where the House of Commons Chamber business would remain in the Palace. In doing so we considered speed, safety, and value for money.²⁸

In response to a parliamentary question, Lord Gardiner of Kimble, Senior Deputy Speaker and a member of the Client Board, informed the House of Lords that in July 2023 the Client Board endorsed the Programme Board's recommended shortlist of R&R delivery options. He also told the House that the Client Board has also "requested that a fallback option of enhanced maintenance and improvement forms part of further detailed design work on these options to inform a decision on the preferred way forward in due course".²⁹

Following the Client Board's meeting on 14 November 2023, the following update was issued:

Update on the Restoration and Renewal Programme

Following a meeting of the R&R Client Board (the Commissions of both Houses) on Tuesday 14 November 2023, parliamentary officials have been asked to update the R&R Strategic Case which is due to be presented to both Houses.

These necessary updates mean the Strategic Case is now expected to be published in the New Year after consideration by the Client Board and ahead of the debates that would follow.

The Client Board at its meeting considered the Strategic Case for R&R, which includes two shortlisted options for the Programme:

- A scenario in which the House of Commons Chamber would maintain a "continued presence" in varying locations in the Palace during the works, and the House of Lords would move out of the Palace while the works are delivered.
- A full decant scenario, where both Houses move out of the Palace at the same time (with the House of Commons returning first).

The Client Board remains satisfied with these two proposed shortlisted options alongside an enhanced maintenance and improvement option in line with good business case practice, and Members will be asked to agree further detailed work on these options ahead of a decision on costed proposals in 2025.

However, the Client Board also asked officials to include in the Strategic Case:

- a more comprehensive description of work to be undertaken on the 'enhanced maintenance and improvement' option so that when Members consider the costed proposals in due course they have more information about this option, which would be the fallback, including the limitations around the outcomes and improvements this scenario would deliver; and

²⁸ UK Parliament, [Quarterly Report: Restoration and Renewal of the Houses of Parliament – July to September 2023](#) (PDF), 6 November 2023, p2

²⁹ [HLPQ458](#), 29 November 2023

- more information on how temporary accommodation would be delivered, including the location of temporary Chamber(s) during R&R work, so that when Members consider the proposals they have more detail about where they would move in both options.

The Strategic Case will be updated with this information before it is published. The R&R Programme continues to have clear direction on developing the two options as well as work to understand the enhanced maintenance and improvement option and temporary accommodation options for the costed proposals due in 2025.³⁰

2.3 Shortlisting the options

One of the key early tasks of the Programme Board was to develop a shortlist of options from those being developed by the Delivery Authority.

The original options

In their first annual progress report on R&R in July 2023, the Clerks of the two Houses of Parliament reported on how the Delivery Authority developed a range of delivery options for the Programme:

The Delivery Authority has developed a wide range of options for restoration and renewal of the Palace which set out various methods of restoring the Palace as well as a spectrum of levels of ambition for the outcomes that could be achieved. Six outcome levels for the scope of works (the ‘what’) were developed alongside six representative construction scenarios (the ‘how’). Combining each of the outcome levels with each of the construction scenarios has led to the production of thirty-six delivery options.³¹

This gave the following matrix of options:

		Outcome Levels					
		0	1	2	3	4	5
Construction Scenarios	A						
	B						
	C						
	D						
	E						
	F						

³⁰ [Update on the Restoration and Renewal Programme](#), 16 November 2023 [source: ParliNet]

³¹ [Restoration and Renewal: Annual Progress Report](#) (PDF), July 2023 HC 1603 2022-23, p14

Whittling down the options

When the process was described to the Programme Board members at their first meeting, in February 2023, they “indicated a preference to arrive at a single, preferred option”.³²

At its meeting in March 2023, the Programme Board agreed that ‘Outcome Level 0’ should be excluded from further analysis, after the Delivery Authority had recommended it “be discounted because it would result in parts of the Palace being unusable”.³³

The Board was told the Construction Scenarios had the biggest impact on cost and the length of duration for which both Houses would be unable to use the Palace.³⁴ This was re-stated at the following meeting. The April minutes recorded “Construction Scenario is the biggest driver of risk and cost”.³⁵

At its meeting on 17 April 2023, the Programme Board “considered how they could reduce the delivery options and identify a ‘landing zone’ or shortlist”. It considered whether the lower Outcome Levels would “deliver outcomes compatible with modern building and health and safety and other standards”. It asked the Delivery Authority for “further information on the scope and benefits achieved from each Outcome Level, including health and safety risk, and any legal or planning related issues”.³⁶

At the April meeting, the Delivery Authority agreed to prepare a short summary of disruption and risk for each Construction Scenario for the next meeting, and information on how they had calculated their assumptions on cost risk of disruption. The Board also requested information on how much ongoing Palace maintenance spend/cost was expected to be reduced by under each option. The Delivery Authority agreed to do this once a landing zone or shortlist had been identified.³⁷

At its May 2023 meeting, the Programme Board was briefed on Outcome Levels and Construction Scenarios, after its request at the previous meeting. Outcome Levels 1 and 2 were “considered not to sufficiently comply with legislation, regulation and standards”. Outcome Level 5 “was not as ambitious as earlier visions for R&R or in comparison to the renovation of the Canadian Parliament”. The Board asked for “a short description of what an Outcome Level above 5 might look like”. The Board also considered the implications of the Parliamentary Building (Restoration and Renewal) Act 2019 for phasing the work, and whether it needed amending.³⁸

³² Programme Board, [Minutes](#) (PDF), 27 February 2023, Item 6

³³ Programme Board, [Minutes](#) (PDF), 28 March 2023, Item 5

³⁴ Programme Board, [Minutes](#) (PDF), 28 March 2023, Item 5

³⁵ Programme Board, [Minutes](#) (PDF), 17 April 2023, Item 7

³⁶ Programme Board, [Minutes](#) (PDF), 17 April 2023, Item 7

³⁷ Programme Board, [Minutes](#) (PDF), 17 April 2023, Item 7

³⁸ Programme Board, [Minutes](#) (PDF), 10 May 2023, Item 5

Also at its May meeting, the Programme Board continued its work on reducing the number of delivery options and identify a ‘landing zone’ or shortlist. Its minutes recorded:

Board Members were supportive of discounting Outcome Levels 1 and 2 because they do not sufficiently meet compliance standards. The Board considered the benefits of identifying two ‘families’ of options – one group with some form of continued occupation throughout the works and one group with some form of full decant.³⁹

Scenarios B and C “are similar scenarios in that they both involve a full decant and phased return”.

Scenario F “would provide the Houses with a continuous presence option”.⁴⁰

The Board requested further information, including duration out of the Palace, cost comparisons and safety and security implications, on three Construction Scenarios (B, C and F). It parked but did not rule out Construction Scenarios A, D and E. The Delivery Authority agreed to provide “further information on the cost and value for money of each benefit under the remaining Outcome Levels”. The Board agreed to rule out Outcome Levels 1 and 2.⁴¹

The Programme Board met twice in June 2023.

On 5 June, it discussed the remaining Outcome Levels (3, 4 and 5) and how easy it would be to move between them. The Board noted that Outcome Level 3 “did not allow for future proofing the works, provided less value for money and included a number of amber-related risks”. It agreed to rule out this Outcome Level.⁴²

The Board discussed the value for money for Construction Scenarios B, C and F and the remaining Outcome Levels, “noting what level of additional total benefits would need to be achieved for a higher outcome level to be the same or better value for money, given the higher capital investment they require”.⁴³

The Board discussed whether it would be possible to take a “pick and mix” approach to Outcome Levels, possibly including some aspects of Outcome Level 5 in Outcome Level 4. It also discussed how confident the Delivery Authority was on the cost estimates provided. The minutes recorded that the Delivery Authority said:

estimates were still early stage and high-level but their team had been rigorously objective when considering and calculating costs and that there had been external assurance undertaken by specialists including those appointed by the Client Team, who had agreed with the DA’s [Delivery Authority’s] assumption underpinning the cost estimates.⁴⁴

The Programme Board agreed “Outcome Level 4 as the Outcome Level for R&R Main Works, and noted the potential it allowed to add additional aspects

³⁹ Programme Board, [Minutes](#) (PDF), 10 May 2023, Item 6

⁴⁰ Programme Board, [Minutes](#) (PDF), 20 June 2023, Item 4

⁴¹ Programme Board, [Minutes](#) (PDF), 10 May 2023, Item 6

⁴² Programme Board, [Minutes](#) (PDF), 5 June 2023, Item 5

⁴³ Programme Board, [Minutes](#) (PDF), 5 June 2023, Item 5

⁴⁴ Programme Board, [Minutes](#) (PDF), 5 June 2023, Item 5

from Outcome Level 5” and agreed to rule out the previously parked Construction Scenarios (A, D and E).

The minutes then noted the Corporate Officers’ legal responsibilities relating to the safety of staff and their views on Construction Scenario F (the “continuous presence” option):

The Board discussed Construction Scenarios B, C and F and considered the length of time out of the Palace for each. The Corporate Officers noted that they have a legal responsibility to ensure that Parliament is safe for all staff and visitors and that they, and not Members, would carry all risk and, where applicable, legal responsibility on this matter in respect of the use of buildings on the Parliamentary Estate. The CEO of the DA noted that once construction started he too would be accountable and some scenarios would require responsibility and accountabilities to be clarified. The Corporate Officers noted that Construction Scenario F was described as carrying significant health and safety risks that would need to be mitigated. The Corporate Officers said that they would be unable to support a construction scenario if they felt that it presented an extraordinary level of unmitigated risk to anyone on the Estate, including staff, contractors and visitors. As Corporate Officers, they have no power to exclude Members from attending proceedings, as Members have a constitutional right to do so. However, the Corporate Officers could indicate that staff were not required to work in an unsafe building, meaning the Houses would potentially be sitting entirely without staff support.⁴⁵

The Board discussed the health and safety risks associated with continued presence and correspondence that the Board had received from the four recognised trade unions in Parliament. The minutes recorded the following points:

- The DA [Delivery Authority] noted that there was a higher health and safety risk with the continued presence scenarios that would need to be mitigated, along with an increase to the costs and duration of the works.
- The Board asked for further information on Construction Scenarios B, C and F for the next meeting, including additional information on the levels of health and safety risk associated with each.
- The Board discussed whether one or two Construction Scenarios should be taken through to the Outline Business case and whether keeping two options helps drive towards a conclusion through comparison.
- The DA said it would take an extra three months during 2024 to work up a second Construction Scenario to outline business case level; this would not affect the timetable for a vote in the Houses on a strategic case by the end of 2023.⁴⁶

On 20 June, the Programme Board ruled out Construction Scenario B. It agreed that Construction Scenario C (a full decant with phased return) and Construction Scenario F (a continuous presence option) should be the

⁴⁵ Programme Board, [Minutes](#) (PDF), 5 June 2023, Item 5

⁴⁶ Programme Board, [Minutes](#) (PDF), 5 June 2023, Item 5

recommended shortlist to the R&R Client Board, along with the previously agreed Outcome Level 4.⁴⁷

2.4 Temporary accommodation

At its May 2023 meeting, the Programme Board noted that “the Queen Elizabeth II Conference Centre (QEII) and the Northern Estate, including Richmond House, remained the most viable options for temporary accommodation during the works, and that a provisional decision on preferred temporary accommodation options would be needed before the summer recess”.⁴⁸

On 20 June 2023, the Board was briefed on and discussed temporary accommodation. It agreed that the Northern Estate should continue to be explored as the location for any decant of the House of Commons and that work should be done to explore Portcullis House and Westminster Hall for House of Commons use.

The Programme Board “provisionally agreed that the QEII Conference Centre remains the preferred decant location for the House of Lords”.⁴⁹

At its meeting on 24 October 2023, the Programme Board was briefed on the proposals for temporary accommodation options on the Northern Estate for any House of Commons decant. It was noted that “other options, including temporary Chambers on the Thames and accommodation in Westminster Hall, had been ruled out for a variety of reasons, including security”.⁵⁰

The Board discussed both decant for the House of Commons, not within the R&R Programme, and decant for the House of Lords, within the R&R Programme.

The Board discussed whether a contingency Commons Chamber should be developed for the continued presence option. It requested “further information on the Houses’ back-up/resilience plans in any further work done on this”.

The Board agreed that:

Richmond House should be recommended to the Client Board as the preferred location for any House of Commons temporary Chamber for the full delivery option.

⁴⁷ Programme Board, [Minutes](#) (PDF), 20 June 2023, Item 4

⁴⁸ Programme Board, [Minutes](#) (PDF), 10 May 2023, Item 4

⁴⁹ Programme Board, [Minutes](#) (PDF), 20 June 2023, Item 3

⁵⁰ Programme Board, [Minutes](#) (PDF), 24 October 2023, Item 4 [please note there are two Item 4s, this is the second]

... feasibility of temporary accommodation on the Northern Estate to support a contingency House of Commons Chamber should be considered for the continued presence delivery option.⁵¹

⁵¹ Programme Board, [Minutes](#) (PDF), 24 October 2023, Item 4 [please note there are two Item 4s, this is the second]

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