



DEBATE PACK

Number CDP-0030, 23 January 2017

Restoration and renewal of the Palace of Westminster

Westminster Hall debate on Wednesday 25 January 2017, 9.30am, Westminster Hall. Initiated by Chris Bryant MP

Summary

The Joint Committee on the Palace of Westminster's report, [*Restoration and Renewal of the Palace of Westminster*](#), was published on 8 September 2016.

The Committee 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".

The Committee published a recommended text of a motion on which its report should be debated. The motion called for its report to be agreed. It would trigger the next stages in the process of the Restoration and Renewal Programme, including the establishment of a Sponsor Board and Delivery Authority by legislation (and shadow bodies, in the meantime); and authorise the development of a fully costed business case for a full decant of the Palace of Westminster, subject to approval by both Houses.

The House has not yet debated the Committee's report.

Since the Committee reported, questions have been raised about the proposals to decant the Palace of Westminster; and the Treasury Committee has announced an inquiry into the value for money of the proposals.

Before the Committee reported an independent options appraisal assessed the costs of a number of approaches to renovating the Palace of Westminster. It found that a complete decant was the most cost-effective option.

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1. Restoration and Renewal: Background

1.1 The scale of the problem

In October 2012, the internal parliamentary pre-feasibility study for a general modernisation of the Palace of Westminster found that:

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.¹

Speaking in November 2013, John Thurso, who spoke in the House of Commons on behalf of the House of Commons Commission, told the House that:

The Palace of Westminster is a heritage site, an iconic building and a major visitor attraction. Most importantly, it is also a working institution in which we work throughout our time as Members of Parliament. It is also a building in which the fabric is at, or well past, its sell-by date. Some mechanical and electrical elements have been nursed on by brilliant engineers, but in any other building they might well have been replaced quite a long time ago. It is clear that a major project of renewal and restoration is required.²

The Joint Committee on the Palace of Westminster, which reported in September 2016, reviewed the condition of the Palace. Whilst, “the actual structure of the building is fundamentally stable”, it reiterated findings of the Pre-Feasibility Study of 2012 on the condition of the building and its services. The Joint Committee concluded that:

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.³

¹ [Restoration and Renewal of the Palace of Westminster: Pre-Feasibility Study and Preliminary Strategic Business Case](#), October 2012, para 72

² [HC Deb 21 November 2013 cc1394-1395](#)

³ Joint Committee on the Palace of Westminster, *Restoration and Renewal of the Palace of Westminster*, 8 September 2016, HC 659 2016-17, para 38-76

1.2 Pre-feasibility study

In January 2012 the House of Commons Commission agreed that officials from both Houses should conduct an initial study to identify options for the long-term upkeep of the Palace of Westminster.⁴ A study group was appointed by the Management Boards of the two Houses 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.

The study group's review was published by the House Service in October 2012.⁵

In October 2012 the House of Commons Commission and the House Committee in the Lords ruled out two options from the study group report: doing nothing; and construction of a new Parliamentary building away from Westminster. They also decided that further analysis should be carried out on the remaining options:

Option 1 – continuing repairs and replacement of the fabric and systems of the Palace over an indefinite period of time.

Option 2 – a defined, rolling programme of more substantial repairs and replacement over a long period, but still working around continued use of the Palace.

Option 3 – scheduling the works over a more concentrated period with parliamentary activities moved elsewhere to allow unrestricted access to the Palace for the delivery of the works.⁶

Also in October 2012, following consideration of the report, the House of Commons Commission and the House of Lords House Committee agreed to commission a comprehensive independent cost appraisal of a range of options for the restoration and renewal of the Palace of Westminster.⁷

Box 1: Decisions taken: Westminster to remain the long-term home of Parliament

On 1 November 2012, John Thurso, who answered questions on behalf of the House of Commons Commission, repeated a statement issued by the Commission following the publication of [Restoration and Renewal of the Palace of Westminster: Pre-Feasibility Study and Preliminary Strategic Business Case](#). The statement confirmed that "the Commission has ruled out the option of constructing a brand new building away from Westminster and no further analysis will be undertaken of this option".⁸

⁴ House of Commons Commission Press Release, [Renovation of the Palace of Westminster](#), 23 January 2012

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

⁶ House of Commons Commission, [Thirty-sixth report of the Commission, and annual report of the Administration Estimate Audit Committee: Financial Year 2013/14](#), 30 July 2014, HC 596 2014-15, pp21-22

⁷ [HC Deb 12 September 2013 cc1155-1156](#)

⁸ [HC Deb 1 November 2012 c330W](#); House of Commons Commission, [Bulletin](#), 29 October 2012

The House Committee, which sets the policy framework for the House of Lords,⁹ has also agreed that the Palace of Westminster should be retained as the “long-term home of Parliament”.¹⁰

1.3 Independent Options Appraisal

On 17 December 2013, written statements were published in both Houses, confirming that the contract for an independent options appraisal (IOA) had been awarded to a consortium led by Deloitte Real Estate and including AECOM and HOK. The terms of the contract for the options appraisal were also confirmed.¹¹ Three broad approaches to the restoration and renewal work were considered:

1. continuing repairs and replacement of the fabric and systems of the Palace over an indefinite period of time;
2. a defined, rolling programme of more substantial repairs and replacement over a long period, but still working around continued use of the Palace; or
3. scheduling the works over a more concentrated period, with parliamentary activities moved elsewhere to allow unrestricted access to the Palace for the delivery of the works.

The appraisal will also explore the range of potential improvements that could be delivered under each of the implementation options, ranging from minimum statutory compliance to a substantial remodelling of the layout and facilities.¹²

Box 2: Decisions taken: Mandate for developing an outline business case

In July 2014 the Management Boards of both Houses approved a mandate for Phase 2 of the Programme, which aims to achieve the decision in principle by 2016. It also allows for work required to develop appropriate programme governance and delivery mechanisms for the medium and longer term, and the initial development of the Outline Business Case to the maximum degree possible pending a decision.¹³

The Independent Options Appraisal (IOA) Report was published in July 2015. The following summary of the IOA Report is taken from the [Restoration and Renewal](#) website:

The IOA compared five scenarios which combined varying levels of scope with three different approaches to carrying out the work. The report does not contain recommendations on which scenario to choose but was intended to enable Parliament to make an informed decision on a preferred way forward. They ranged from a ‘do minimum’ gradual approach, to making significant improvements in a single phase approach. The key findings were:

⁹ House Committee, [Role](#)

¹⁰ House of Lords, [Annual Report of the Administration 2012/13](#), July 2013, HL Paper 45 2013-14, p6

¹¹ [HC Deb 17 December 2013 c89WS](#); [HL Deb 17 December 2013 cWS137](#)

¹² Houses of Parliament news, [Options appraisal contract awarded](#), 17 December 2013

¹³ House of Commons, [Palace of Westminster Restoration and Renewal Programme: What happens next?](#), House of Commons Management Board, [Minutes of the Management Board meeting held on 3 July 2014 at 3.30pm](#), Item 4

Rolling programme - Undertaking the minimum work with Parliament remaining in occupation would take around 32 years. During that time both Chambers would have to close for between two to four years, at different times, but sittings could be relocated to a temporary structure elsewhere in or around the Palace. Users of the Palace would have to tolerate high levels of noise and disruption over a long period and there would be a level or risk to the continuous running of the business of Parliament. This option is the least predictable in terms of duration and cost. Cost estimate for a 'do minimum' outcome: approximately £5.7 billion.

Partial move out - The work would be carried out more quickly if first the Commons, then the Lords, were to move to temporary accommodation outside the Palace. Security and nuisance issues would have to be managed at the boundary between the two zones. This approach would take around 11 years. Cost estimate for a 'do minimum' outcome: approximately £3.9 billion. Cost estimate for some improvements: approximately £4.4 billion.

Full move out - If both Houses fully vacated the Palace this would take the least time and would avoid disruption to Parliament from construction works. Risks to the continuous running of the business of Parliament would be greatly reduced, assuming that sufficient temporary accommodation can be found for occupants of the Palace. This approach would take around six years. Cost estimate for some improvements: approximately £3.5 billion. Cost estimate for significant improvements: approximately £3.9 billion.

References to capital expenditure ranges in the IOA should not be interpreted as either setting or estimating a budget for the Restoration and Renewal Programme. A budget will not be set until a detailed design brief and means of delivery are agreed. This would be set out in an outline business case, which is unlikely to be drawn up before 2018.¹⁴

The IOA Team noted that they had had to create a variant of Delivery Option 1 (ongoing repairs to the Palace overtime to allow continuing occupancy) because Delivery Option 1 "could not meet the Programme Objectives".¹⁵

1.4 Joint Committee review of the Options

Following the publication of the IOA report, the two Houses of Parliament appointed members to serve on a joint committee. The Joint Committee on the Palace of Westminster was appointed to "consider the restoration and renewal of the Palace of Westminster". When the Committee issued a call for evidence in November 2015, it described its main task:

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.¹⁶

¹⁴ Houses of Parliament, *Restoration and Renewal – IOA Report*

¹⁵ Deloitte, AECOM, H&K, *Palace of Westminster Restoration and Renewal Programme Independent Options Appraisal – Final Report, Volume 1*, September 2014, p57

¹⁶ Joint Committee on the Palace of Westminster, *Call for Evidence*, 30 November 2015

The Committee went on to say that it was required to make recommendations in two main areas:

- The broad scope of the work to be carried out
- How the work should be delivered.

Under the second, it sought to address the question of whether Parliament should remain on site for the duration of the works “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”.

The Joint Committee’s report was published on 8 September 2016.¹⁷ The Joint Committee concluded that:

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.¹⁸

However, before work on the restoration and renewal of the Palace of Westminster could begin, the Joint Committee said that “it is now for the Delivery Authority to test our conclusions and to validate that a full decant is feasible, achievable and cost-effective”. It recommended that the Delivery Authority was established as soon as possible, as an arm’s length body.

The Delivery Authority would be responsible for taking the Programme into its next phase. Its work would be overseen by a Sponsor Board, which would also “ensure that its plans meet the requirements of both Houses of Parliament”.

But before either the Delivery Authority or the Sponsor Board were established, decisions were required from both Houses of Parliament:

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

¹⁷ Joint Committee on the Palace of Westminster, [Restoration and Renewal of the Palace of Westminster](#), 8 September 2016, HC 659 2016-17

¹⁸ Joint Committee on the Palace of Westminster, [Restoration and Renewal of the Palace of Westminster](#), 8 September 2016, HC 659 2016-17, Summary

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.

The Joint Committee recommended that the two Houses of Parliament debate its report and suggested that the debates take place on the following motion:

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.¹⁹

Decisions following the Joint Committee report

Agreement to the motion proposed by the Joint Committee would trigger the next stages in the process of the Restoration and Renewal Programme. The House would be agreeing in principle the establishment of a Sponsor Board and Delivery Authority by legislation (the House would subsequently have to consider and agree that legislation).

The motion also approves the establishment of a shadow Sponsor Board and a shadow Delivery Authority, and authorises the development of a fully costed business case for a full decant of the Palace of Westminster. The Delivery Authority would test, confirm and cost this case. Once the full business case has been completed, it would need to be approved by both Houses.

The Leader of the House has not yet scheduled a debate on the Joint Committee's report. On 15 December 2016, he told Valerie Vaz, the Shadow Leader of the House of Commons that he hoped to announce the date of the debate "as soon as possible".²⁰

¹⁹ Joint Committee on the Palace of Westminster, *Restoration and Renewal of the Palace of Westminster*, 8 September 2016, HC 659 2016-17, Summary

²⁰ [HC Deb 15 December 2016 c960](#)

1.5 Reviewing the Joint Committee's proposals

The Joint Committee on the Palace of Westminster set out its preferred options for the delivery and scope of the R&R Programme, and recognised that further work will be necessary in order to validate its conclusions in these areas, as well as test their feasibility.²¹

In December 2016, Andrew Tyrie, Chair of the Treasury Committee, wrote to David Lidington, Leader of the House of Commons, to ask for greater clarity on the value for money of the Restoration and Renewal of the Palace of Westminster.²²

The Treasury Committee published the exchange of letters between Mr Tyrie and Mr Lidington, in which the request was made, information provided, the Committee confirmed that an inquiry was to be held:

- Treasury Committee, [letter to David Lidington on] [Restoration and Renewal of the Houses of Parliament](#), 15 December 2016
- Treasury Committee, [Letter from David Lidington in reply to the letter of 15 December](#), 22 December 2016
- Treasury Committee, [letter to David Lidington on] [Restoration and Renewal of the Houses of Parliament](#), 12 January 2017
- Treasury Committee, [Letter from David Lidington in reply to the letter of 12 January](#), 17 January 2017

On 16 January 2017, the Treasury Committee issued a call for evidence and views on the options as set out in the independent options appraisal (July 2015) and the Joint Committee on the Palace of Westminster report (September 2016). The Committee asked for views on the following questions:

- 1 What are the comparative costs of the various options described by the consultants? What is the effect on the costs of restating this on a constant price basis and discounted at an appropriate discount rate? Would the Treasury's Green Book discount rate be the appropriate rate? Is the scope of the work proposed entirely necessary or could it be scaled back?
- 2 What are the advantages and disadvantages of full decant, whereby both Houses vacate Parliament for the duration of the work, or partial decant, whereby one House vacates at a time?
- 3 How reasonable are the cost estimates for the capital works as described in the consultant's report? How reasonable are the estimates for operating costs for the refurbished Palace of Westminster when the works are completed?
- 4 Would it be possible to carry out full restoration over shorter periods than 11 and 32 years respectively with a partial decant or with no decant? What, if any, options might be considered over periods of greater than 11 or less than 32 years?
- 5 How urgent is it to complete work on the restoration? Is it as soon as feasibly possible? Could the start of work be delayed beyond 2020 or would this involve unacceptable risks for health and safety and for the

²¹ Joint Committee on the Palace of Westminster, [Restoration and Renewal of the Palace of Westminster](#), 8 September 2016, HC 659 2016-17, para 31

²² Treasury Committee news, [Restoration and Renewal of the Palace of Westminster](#), 18 December 2016

satisfactory working of Parliament? Would a later start result in much higher costs later?

- 6 How important is the independent management of large-scale Government projects? How, and by whom, should the project be managed?
- 7 How comprehensive does the restoration need to be? Are the options put forward by the consultants unnecessarily ambitious? Is there a less costly option than the “no enhancement” option described by the consultants?²³

1.6 Opportunities arising from R&R

The University of Sheffield’s Crick Centre has launched an interdisciplinary research and public engagement project, entitled *Designing for Democracy: The Restoration and Renewal of the Palace of Westminster*.

The project will examine how the design of our parliamentary buildings affects the way our politicians act and how we view politics. It will consider international examples of rebuilt or new parliaments, and the history of parliamentary design. We will explore how a new Palace of Westminster could enable effective parliamentary scrutiny and inclusive democracy.²⁴

The Hansard Society has established a project entitled *Future Parliament: restoration and Reform of the Palace of Westminster*.²⁵ The Hansard Society argued that “there has been little consideration of the wider legacy opportunities that the restoration programme might deliver”. Its project aims to address that:

Our new ‘Future Parliament’ project will help fill that gap. As well as augmenting our existing body of work about reform of the scrutiny and legislative processes, and the role and work of MPs, we will be exploring new ideas in the physical, cultural and digital spheres to help Parliament build a rich legacy of democratic reform.

It has identified three key themes:

- Democratic space
- Future-proofing
- Digital democracy

²³ Treasury Committee news, [Restoration and Renewal of the Palace of Westminster inquiry launched](#), 16 January 2016

²⁴ Crick Centre, [Designing for Democracy: The Restoration and Renewal of the Palace of Westminster](#)

²⁵ Hansard Society, [Future Parliament: restoration and Reform of the Palace of Westminster](#)

2. Press and journal articles

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Quarter of voters want parliament sold or knocked down

The Times (subscription required)

Matt Chorley

Matt Chorley

A YouGov poll for The Times shows that 57 per cent think that the Palace of Westminster should be saved, with support highest among Conservative and Lib Dem voters.

Houses of Parliament in urgent need of multi-billion pound repairs 'to avoid being flooded with sewage'

Independent

Shaun Connolly

16 January 2017

MPs warned that the Palace of Westminster needs to be evacuated for emergency repairs but the chairman of the Treasury Committee, Andrew Tyrie, said that insufficient evidence had been produced to justify the restoration.

Rebellion will put parliament's future at risk, MPs are warned

Times (subscription required)

Matt Chorley

16 January 2017

Up to 100 MPs of all parties are backing a campaign to allow them to sit in the Lords while the work is carried out.

Chris Bryant, the Labour MP who sits on the restoration and renewal joint committee, said that the rebellion risked delaying the project, adding to the cost and putting the building at risk."

MPs launch inquiry into £4bn Palace of Westminster renovation plan

Independent

Ben Kentish

16 January 2017

Multi-billion pound plans to renovate the Houses of Parliament are to be investigated by a committee of MPs amid growing concern about the cost of the project.

Westminster refurb: if we get this wrong we could lose our most iconic national building

Times (subscription required)

Chris Bryant

16 January 2017

It is now 18 weeks since the Restoration and Renewal Committee published its report [...] both the Commons and Lords will have to move out for five to six years if we are to deliver the programme safely and at minimum cost to the taxpayer."

Parliament burned down 183 years ago. Only 24-hour patrols are stopping another fire

The Observer

Toby Helm

15 January 2017

But some MPs say that total evacuation is unnecessary and will be too disruptive, backing options for a partial exodus that will delay completion for decades and cost 10 times as much.

Keep Parliament in Palace of Westminster during refurb, MPs urge

Architect's Journal

12 January 2017

A cross-party group of MPs will urge colleagues later this week to back an alternative architectural vision for the £4 billion restoration of the Palace of Westminster, allowing Parliament to remain on site during the works.

MPs build Brexit case to stay at Westminster

Financial Times (subscription required)

Henry Mance

6 January 2017

A group of MPs are arguing that plans to move the legislature to a temporary home would undermine British soft power in the crucial years after leaving the EU.

Four architect firms shortlisted for Palace of Westminster renovation

Financial Times (subscription required)

Gill Plimmer and Edwin Heathcote

11 November 2016

Four leading architecture firms, including the practice behind the lauded restoration of Berlin's Reichstag, have been shortlisted for the design work to renovate the Palace of Westminster.

3. Parliamentary material

3.1 Oral questions

House of Commons Commission

HC Deb 21 Jan 2017 cc1543-4

The right hon. Member for Carshalton and Wallington (Tom Brake), representing the House of Commons Commission, was asked—

Restoration and Renewal

1. Peter Grant (Glenrothes) (SNP): What steps the Commission plans to take to ensure public and parliamentary scrutiny of the restoration and renewal of the Palace of Westminster after a decision on the options for that project has been made. [903179]

2. Dr Lisa Cameron (East Kilbride, Strathaven and Lesmahagow) (SNP): What steps the Commission plans to take to ensure public and parliamentary scrutiny of the restoration and renewal of the Palace of Westminster after a decision on the options for that project has been made. [903180]

Tom Brake (Carshalton and Wallington): I anticipate that both Houses will have an opportunity to debate the matter once the Joint Committee on the Palace of Westminster has reported. The question of future scrutiny will be aired in those debates and the House of Commons Commission will listen carefully to the views expressed before making any decisions.

Peter Grant: Many of my constituents find it difficult to understand how we can consider spending billions of pounds on a palace—literally a palace—for parliamentarians when so many of them can barely afford a roof of any kind over their heads. Can we have an assurance that the Joint Committee, which so far has met entirely in private, will soon meet in public and that all documentation relating to its considerations will be made public?

Tom Brake: I am sure that the Joint Committee and the Leader of the House will have heard the hon. Gentleman's comments and will want to respond positively. It is worth underlining the fact that we have neglected the upkeep of this building for many decades and that we do need to make investment in what is, after all, a world heritage building.

Dr Cameron: I would like to thank the House of Commons Commission for contacting me, as chair of the all-party group for disability, to ensure that we are involved in plans to restore the Palace of Westminster. Will the right hon. Gentleman ensure that all restoration and renewal work fully addresses issues of accessibility for people who have disabilities?

Tom Brake: I do not want to pre-empt what the Joint Committee will come up with, but I am sure it will carefully consider that matter. I think that every Member of the House will agree that it would be a completely missed opportunity if these works did not also ensure that the Palace is fully accessible to anyone with disabilities.

Jake Berry (Rossendale and Darwen) (Con): As well as having an opportunity to debate the R and R programme, it is hugely important that Members have an opportunity to promote businesses in their constituencies that can

take part in the works. For example, Crown Paints, based in Darwen, would be a fantastic company to provide paint and to advise at this early stage to ensure that costs are reduced.

Tom Brake: The hon. Gentleman makes a very good point. Clearly, a project on this scale will require the participation of small, medium and large businesses from all over the country. When the project comes forward, I hope that the initiatives used to promote opportunities for businesses in the run-up to the Olympics will be deployed for the restoration of the Palace.

Jesse Norman (Hereford and South Herefordshire) (Con): Could the House of Commons Commission and the Joint Committee consider the idea of an historic trust into which the estate could be placed in order to separate the politics of renewal from the restoration of a national asset?

Tom Brake: Again, I cannot speak for the Joint Committee, but the Leader of the House, who is one of its big players, will have heard the hon. Gentleman's point and I am sure will want to give it due consideration.

Mr David Winnick (Walsall North) (Lab): I am all for scrutiny, public and parliamentary, but can the right hon. Gentleman confirm that a decision will definitely be reached before the end of this Parliament and that we will not waste any further time or public money debating this very important issue in the next Parliament?

Tom Brake: I am not in a position to give the hon. Gentleman that reassurance because it is for the Joint Committee to decide what it recommends as a way forward. I think that everyone in this place knows that this work must be undertaken, and it is in our interest and that of the taxpayer that it is pursued vigorously. The longer we delay, the greater the costs associated with the works.

Mr Barry Sheerman (Huddersfield) (Lab/Co-op): May I urge the right hon. Gentleman to look seriously, and imaginatively, at how this reconstruction is going to be funded—perhaps by public subscription through a form of crowd-funding? May I warn him not to enter into a careless public finance initiative like the one in Halifax, where £770 million has been paid back on a hospital that cost £70 million?

Tom Brake: I hope that everyone in this place has learned the lessons of PFI. Again, it is not for me to work out what the financial arrangements are going to be, but clearly PFI may well be one of the more expensive options. I hope that the Treasury will look at something that is perhaps more straightforward in funding these improvements.

3.2 Written questions

Palace of Westminster: Repairs and Maintenance

20 Dec 2016 | PQ 57888

Asked by: Hart, Simon

To ask the Rt. hon. Member for Carshalton and Wallington, representing the House of Commons Commission, how many staff have been (a) recruited and (b) redeployed to work on the Palace of Westminster restoration and renewal programme; and in what salary bands (i) those recruited and (ii) those redeployed are employed.

Answering member: Tom Brake | **Department:** House of Commons Commission

The Restoration and Renewal Programme currently employs 29 staff. Of these, 17 have been competitively recruited to the Programme from within the House of Commons or House of Lords Service, seven have been recruited externally, three are agency staff and two are on loan, from the Corporate Services Team and the Parliamentary Digital Service. Most Programme staff are on temporary contracts; permanent staff of the two Houses would return to their previous Teams if their contracts were not renewed or extended.

	Pay band	Internal	External	Total
SCS1A	1		1	
SCS1	3		3	
A1	2	3 ¹		5
A2	3	7 ²		10
A3	1		1	
B1	4	1		5
B2	1	1		2
C	1		1	
D1	1		1	
TOTAL	17	12		29

¹Includes two agency staff

²Includes one agency staff and two staff on loan

[Parliament: Location](#)

21 Nov 2016 | PQ 52505

Asked by: Mann, John

To ask the Rt. hon. Member for Carshalton and Wallington representing the House of Commons Commission, what estimate the Commission has made of the (a) size of the chamber and (b) office capacity needed for the (i) House of Commons and (ii) House of Lords when Parliament is temporarily relocated during the restoration and renewal of the Palace of Westminster.

Answering member: Tom Brake | **Department:** House of Commons Commission

The House of Commons Commission has not made any assessment of the size of the chambers and office capacity needed for both Houses if Parliament is temporarily relocated during the restoration and renewal of the Palace of Westminster. The Joint Committee on the Palace of Westminster considered various options for temporary accommodation for both Houses, which are outlined in its Report (First Report of Session 2016–17, HC 659).

The Committee recommended that the general floor space and layout of the two Chambers should be replicated as far as possible in any temporary accommodation, and that office accommodation should provide the same number of desks for members of both Houses as are currently provided in the Palace. The House of Commons Commission has no responsibility for estimating the future size of the House of Lords.

[House of Lords: Location](#)

21 Nov 2016 | PQ 52504

Asked by: Mann, John

To ask the Rt. hon. Member for Carshalton and Wallington representing the House of Commons Commission, what assessment the Commission has made of the options for the temporary relocation of the House of Lords during the restoration and renewal of the Palace of Westminster with the membership of that House (a) remaining at current levels and (b) decreasing by 2022.

Answering member: Tom Brake | **Department:** House of Commons Commission

The House of Commons Commission has not made any assessment of the size of the chambers and office capacity needed for both Houses if Parliament is temporarily relocated during the restoration and renewal of the Palace of Westminster. The Joint Committee on the Palace of Westminster considered various options for temporary accommodation for both Houses, which are outlined in its Report (First Report of Session 2016–17, HC 659).

The Committee recommended that the general floor space and layout of the two Chambers should be replicated as far as possible in any temporary accommodation, and that office accommodation should provide the same number of desks for members of both Houses as are currently provided in the Palace. The House of Commons Commission has no responsibility for estimating the future size of the House of Lords.

[House of Commons Chamber](#)

07 Sep 2015 | PQ 8348

Asked by: Brock, Deidre

To ask the hon. Member for Carshalton and Wallington representing the House of Commons Commission, whether consideration has been given to ensuring that there will be adequate provision for every hon. Member to attend proceedings and take part in proceedings in the Chamber following the restoration and renewal of the Palace of Westminster.

Answering member: Tom Brake | **Department:** House of Commons Commission

The two Houses have established a Joint Committee on the Palace of Westminster which will report and make recommendations to both Houses on the future restoration and renewal of the Palace. It will be for the two Houses to decide in due course whether or not they wish to make changes to the layout and seating arrangements of their respective Chambers in conjunction with the essential replacement of service infrastructure and other repairs to the fabric of the building. I am sure that the Joint Committee will be happy to receive the hon. Lady's ideas on this subject.

[Palace of Westminster](#)

07 Sep 2015 | PQ 8344

Asked by: Brock, Deidre

To ask the hon. Member for Carshalton and Wallington representing the House of Commons Commission, whether options other than remaining in the Palace of Westminster have been considered for the long-term future of the House.

Answering member: Tom Brake | **Department:** House of Commons Commission

An option to move Parliament out of the Palace of Westminster to a new purpose-built building was included in the Restoration and Renewal Pre-Feasibility Study of 2012. The House of Commons Commission reviewed that study on 29 October 2012. It decided to rule out the option of constructing a new building away from Westminster and agreed that no further analysis would be undertaken on this option. The House Committee of the House of Lords took a similar view.

3.3 Statements

Restoration and Renewal of the Palace of Westminster

Independent Options Appraisal: Written statement by Sir Paul Beresford (Representing the House of Commons Commission)

18 Jun 2015 | HCWS43

An independent appraisal of options for the restoration and renewal of the Palace of Westminster is published today. It was requested by the House of Commons Commission and the House of Lords House Committee in the last parliament following a pre-feasibility study and preliminary strategic business case which was published in October 2012. The new study has been carried out by a consortium consisting of Deloitte Real Estate, AECOM and HOK. The IOA (together with two volumes of detailed supporting materials) is available on the Parliament website at: www.restorationandrenewal.parliament.uk.

The restoration and renewal of the Palace of Westminster will be a major challenge facing Parliament in the coming years and is certain to be a matter of public interest. The process to establish a Joint Committee, which will make recommendations to both Houses on how to proceed, is already under way. It will be for the Joint Committee to decide how best to carry out its task.

Palace of Westminster Restoration and Renewal Programme

Written statement by John Thurso (Representing the House of Commons Commission)

16 Dec 2014 | HCWS108

Following their consideration of the Pre-Feasibility Study on the Restoration and Renewal of the Palace of Westminster in October 2012, the House of Commons Commission and the House of Lords House Committee agreed that a more detailed study should be carried out by an independent third party and that it should focus on the costs and technical issues associated with the range of options for carrying out the work.

In December 2013, the contract for an independent options appraisal (IOA) was awarded to a consortium led by Deloitte Real Estate and including AECOM and HOK. This followed a rigorous evaluation and selection process. The contract value was £2.02 million.

The full report containing the findings will be published in June/July 2015. It will form the basis for consultation and engagement in the next parliament, with a decision on a preferred way forward expected by spring 2016.

Other major public projects consistently demonstrate that effort put into early planning is rewarded later with financial savings. While the IOA will provide detailed information to help the two Houses make a broad

decision in principle, further studies are also required to support the more detailed planning and design process that must follow that decision.

The additional studies include a re-assessment of the risk of plant failure (on completion of the Mechanical and Electrical Medium-Term Programme which has been addressing areas at greatest immediate risk), planning how the service infrastructure of the Palace will relate to the rest of the Parliamentary Estate, and further developing Parliament's requirements in areas such as security and visitor management. These studies are being commenced now to ensure that Parliament is ready to commission design work once a decision has been made, which in turn will keep the programme on track for a potential 2020/21 start date without anticipating the selection of a particular scenario.

The next phase of studies and reports is expected to cost £5.8m, shared between the two Houses and spread over financial years 2014/15 and 2015/16.

The work is being carried out by Deloitte Real Estate, HOK and AECOM following agreement to extend the contract under which the consortium prepared the IOA. As additional services were envisaged under this contract, which was procured in accordance with public procurement rules, retendering is not required.

Palace of Westminster (Restoration and Renewal)

Written statement by John Thurso (Representing the House of Commons Commission)

17 Dec 2013 | 572 c89WS

Following their consideration of the pre-feasibility study on the restoration and renewal of the Palace of Westminster in October 2012, the House of Commons Commission and the House of Lords House Committee agreed that the next more detailed study should be carried out by an independent third party and that it should focus on the costs and technical issues associated with the remaining options.

The contract for an independent options appraisal (IOA) has now been awarded to a consortium led by Deloitte Real Estate and including AECOM and HOK. This follows a rigorous evaluation and selection process. Work on the study is expected to begin early in 2014.

The palace will require very significant renovation in the years to come. The Commission and the House Committee recognised in 2012 that doing nothing is not an option. They accept their responsibilities as custodians of a great iconic building and the need to ensure its future. Selection of a preferred way forward is expected to occur during the course of the next Parliament, not this one.

The contract for the IOA will set a maximum price of £2,019,295 and a fixed price (which may be lower but not higher) will be agreed two months into the contract once the consultants have become familiar with the extensive survey work already done on the palace.

Queen Elizabeth II Conference Centre

Written statement by the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government (Brandon Lewis)

05 Dec 2012 | 554 c57WS

My hon. Friend the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Communities and Local Government, Baroness Hanham, has made the following written ministerial statement:

Further to the statement made to both Houses on 23 April 2012, a pre-market engagement exercise of the Queen Elizabeth II Conference Centre conference business was undertaken over the summer. This exercise demonstrated that there would be market interest in running the conference business.

Since that exercise was carried out, Parliament has published an initial study into options for the long-term upkeep of the Palace of Westminster. The report highlights a number of options for the restoration and renewal of the palace. These require further study, but may have implications for the future use of the Queen Elizabeth II Conference Centre, should Parliament decide that it needs the centre.

While recognising that Parliament needs to continue to have a full range of options available, the Government have concluded that current arrangements for the management of the centre should be maintained for the present time. This will ensure that bookings can continue to be made and allow the centre to plan future business with greater certainty. Should Parliament indicate that it requires the centre in future, it has been agreed that discussions will take place on time scales which recognise the importance of the centre maintaining a viable business plan, to provide assurance to potential customers.

3.4 Select Committees

Joint Committee on the Palace of Westminster

Membership of the Committee

The Joint Committee on the Palace of Westminster was established on 16 and 20 July 2015. There were six members from the House of Commons, appointed on 16 July 2015 and six members from the House of Lords, appointed on 25 May 2016.

The Committee was co-Chaired by Chris Grayling and Baroness Stowell of Beeston.

Role of the Committee

The Joint Committee on the Palace of Westminster has been appointed to consider the Restoration and Renewal of the Palace of Westminster.

The Joint Committee was appointed by the House of Commons on 16 July and by the House of Lords on 20 July. The Committee has twelve members (six from each House).

Reports and associated evidence

1st Report - Restoration and Renewal of the Palace of Westminster

HL Paper 41 HC 659 | Published 08 September 2016

Restoration and Renewal of the Palace of Westminster - evidence volume

Published 08 September 2016

Oral Evidence

Restoration and renewal of the Palace of Westminster

07 Mar 2016 | HC 870 2015-16

Restoration and renewal of the Palace of Westminster

29 Feb 2016 | HC 870 2015-16

Independent Options Appraisal

On 18 June 2015, an [Independent Options Appraisal \(IOA\)](#) for the Restoration and Renewal of the Palace of Westminster was published by an independent consortium led by Deloitte Real Estate and including AECOM and HOK.

Treasury Committee

Restoration and Renewal of the Palace of Westminster inquiry

Treasury Committee launches inquiry on restoration project. Restoration and Renewal is likely to be one of the largest major restorations in the history of the public sector estate. The consultants have estimated that the cost, if carried out over the minimum period of 5-8 years, will be between £3.5 and £4 billion. (16 January 2017)

[Terms of reference: Restoration and Renewal of the Palace of Westminster](#)

4. Further reading and useful links

4.1 Websites

Parliament website: Restoration and Renewal of the Palace of Westminster

The Restoration and Renewal Programme has been established to tackle the significant work that needs to be done to protect the heritage of the Palace of Westminster and ensure it can continue to serve as home to the UK Parliament in the 21st century and beyond.

Find out more about the **Palace of Westminster Restoration and Renewal Programme** (external site)

Independent Options Appraisal

The Independent Options Appraisal (IOA) of the Palace of Westminster Restoration and Renewal Programme is an independent assessment of a range of options, with costs and timescales, for a major restoration and renewal of the Palace.

The IOA was published on 18 June 2015 and follows on from a [Pre-feasibility Study](#) on the Palace in 2012. A Joint Select Committee of the two Houses was formed in July 2015 to consider the findings of the IOA report. The Committee will recommend a preferred way forward, with a Decision in Principle expected to be made by members of both Houses during the course of 2016.

IOA Final Report

An independently produced, costed options appraisal of the Scenarios, to enable Parliament to reach a well-founded decision in principle on the means of restoring and renewing the Palace of Westminster.

[Download IOA report \(A4\)](#) PDF, 250 pages, 17MB

4.2 Blogs

Moving out of the Palace

The Norton View (personal blog from Lord Norton of Louth)

10 January 2017

"Last September, the Joint Committee on the Restoration and Renewal of the Palace of Westminster issued its [report](#). It drew attention to the fact that, although the Palace of Westminster is structurally sound, the building's mechanical and electrical services – the basic services enabling the place to operate – are no longer amenable to a 'patch and mend' approach and, without an intensive programme, the Palace will become uninhabitable. The infrastructure is basically a mess – it is not clear where all the wiring goes, the whole place is a major fire risk, and there

is the danger of catastrophic failure. Anyone who walks round the Palace will see the existing 'patch and mend' work going on, which is in itself extensive, but it is not sufficient."

The restoration and renewal of the Palace of Westminster: lessons from Canada

The Constitution Unit Blog

13 September 2016

"The Joint Committee on Restoration and Renewal of the Palace of Westminster reported last week, recommending a full decant from the Palace. Attention is now turning towards the process of implementation. The Canadian parliament's more advanced redevelopment programme, which will see MPs sitting in a temporary chamber from 2018, can offer some insights into some of the challenges likely to be faced."

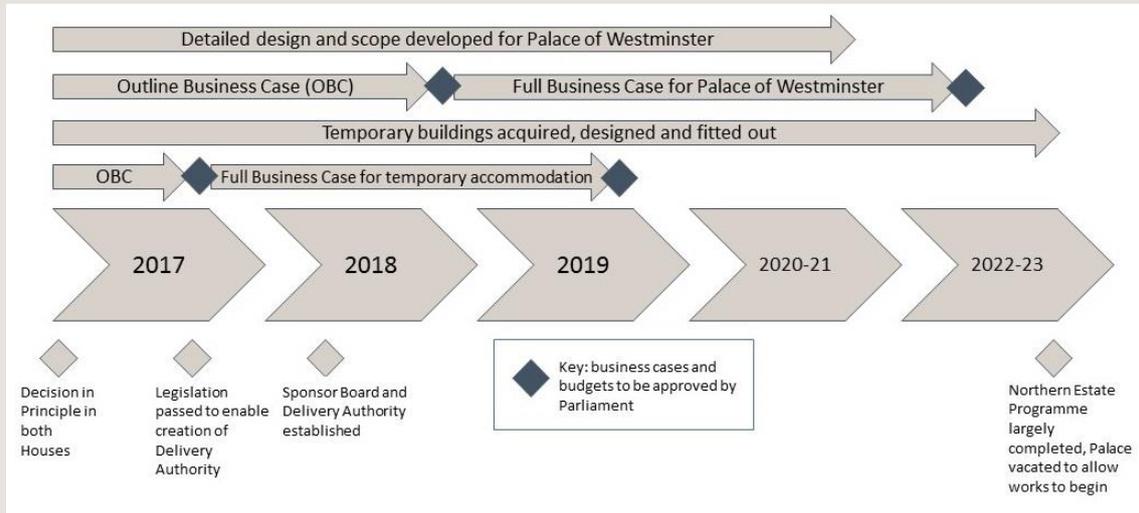


PALACE OF WESTMINSTER RESTORATION AND RENEWAL PROGRAMME – AT A GLANCE

1. How big is the project?

Because of the size and labyrinthine structure of the Palace, it is thought to be the biggest and most complex renovation programme of any single building this country has known. In terms of area, the Palace has approximately the same floor area as the HSBC tower in Canary Wharf.

2. What are the timescales?



3. If the work is so urgent why are we waiting six years to do it?

A lot needs to happen between our extensive planning work now and actual building works to prevent further and costly delay. Work needing to begin now to ensure an early 2020s start date includes the:

- Establishment of a Sponsor Board and Delivery Authority, through legislation, to first test and validate the Joint Committee's recommendations.
- Completion of Northern Estate Programme **and** acquisition of temporary buildings.
- Consultation with Members and staff on design and scope for temporary accommodation.
- Procurement of contractors and services **and** securing specialist and trade skills.
- Development of a detailed design brief, business case and budget for Parliament's approval.

4. Why are we being recommended to move out? Why can't we stay in the Palace?

The single phase move out is quicker, safer, more cost effective and less disruptive. Staying in the Palace was looked at in detail by the Joint Committee but was deemed unrealistic due to the heavy disruption, significantly higher cost, and safety and security risks it would bring. Noise would be far worse than current business as usual work generates, which recently caused the evacuation of the Lords Chamber.

5. What if we move out and aren't allowed back?

Both Houses made a clear commitment in 2012 that the Palace would remain the permanent home of Parliament. That has not changed and returning remains the absolute objective of the works proposed.

6. Will it mean that single term MPs will never get to experience the Commons Chamber?

No. The six-year Programme timescale has been designed specifically over two Parliament terms to ensure that any single-term MP will get to sit in the Chamber.

7. What will a renovated Palace look like?

We're already investigating ways to create a modern, accessible, accountable parliament, with better, safer access for those who work in and visit. There will be major improvements to disabled access and fire safety, the removal of risks caused by asbestos, improved energy efficiency and IT and telecoms/wifi.

8. What about the impact on State Events?

Alternative plans for State events are already being considered and developed to take account of all future R&R decisions.

PALACE OF WESTMINSTER RESTORATION AND RENEWAL PROGRAMME

MEMBERS' FAQs

January 2017

1 – Restoration and Renewal – ‘A clear and pressing need’

1. What is the Restoration and Renewal Programme?

The Restoration and Renewal Programme was established to tackle the significant work that needs to be done to protect the heritage of the Palace of Westminster and ensure it can continue to serve as home to the UK Parliament in the 21st century and beyond.

A Joint Select Committee on the Palace of Westminster was appointed in July 2015 to consider an independent options appraisal (IOA) and make recommendations on a preferred way forward for the restoration and renewal of the building. The Joint Committee published its recommendations on 8 September 2016. Both Houses will now need to consider the main recommendations of the Committee report and agree a preferred way forward.

2. What are the main benefits?

The main benefit would be the securing of the future of the Palace as the home of the UK Parliament and preserving its UNESCO World Heritage Site status. It would contain all the services needed by a modern, accessible, accountable parliament, with better, safer access for those who work in and visit it. Others include improved energy efficiency, improvements to disabled access, fire safety and the removal of risks caused by asbestos. Once complete, the restoration would reduce the risk of interruption to Parliamentary business. It would also present employment and training opportunities such as apprenticeships for construction workers and those with specialist conservation skills.

3. Why is the Restoration and Renewal Programme needed?

There has been significant under-investment in the fabric of the Palace since at least the 1940s, when parts of it were renovated following bomb damage during the Second World War. Since its construction in the mid-1800s, many features have never undergone major renovation, and the heating, ventilation, water, drainage and electrical systems are now extremely antiquated. Asbestos is present throughout, and major improvements to fire safety are needed. The cumulative effects of pollution and lack of maintenance are causing extensive decay to stonework. Corrosion has also occurred in gutters and downpipes, resulting in visible damage to carved stonework and ceilings. Internal plumbing regularly fails and the effects of wear and tear are evident in all the principal spaces. The current ‘patch and mend’ approach tackles only the highest risk problems and is no longer sustainable as the rate at which the work can be carried out is slower than the rate at which the building is deteriorating. Approximately £49 million was spent on essential work to the Palace during 2014/15 and the backlog of essential repairs (already estimated at more than £1 billion in 2012), and in turn the risk of system failure, is growing significantly over time. By 2020, some 40% of the mechanical and electrical plant (M&E) will be at an unacceptably high risk of failure. By 2025, it will be more than 50%.

4. Why is the work needed now?

Following its year-long inquiry, the Joint Committee on the Palace of Westminster concluded that there was “a clear and pressing need to tackle the backlog of work to the Palace in a comprehensive and strategic manner”. The longer the essential work is left, the greater the risk that the building will

suffer a sudden, catastrophic failure, or that small, incremental failures such as fire, flood or power failure, make the building uninhabitable and bring a sudden stop to the work of Parliament.

5. Are the mechanical and electrical services in the building really in such a bad state?

The growing backlog of work has left the Palace with a potentially catastrophic mix of aging services, particularly in the basements, roofs and within the 98 vertical risers (shafts) that weave through the Grade I listed interior. To date, all intrusive renovation work has been carried out around sittings of Parliament and due to time constraints, redundant systems have often been left *in situ*. Steam systems, gas lines and water pipes are often laid one on top of another, alongside high voltage electricity wires, broadcasting cables and other vulnerable equipment. This makes the likelihood of a major failure, potentially putting the safety of the building and its occupants at risk, highly likely. Some pipes are more than 100 years old, many of the systems passed their life expectancy decades ago, and a leak from the steam system or water pipes has the potential to cause huge damage and disruption. There is a real risk of fire spreading if this occurs in the wrong place, such as next to a major power supply. An urgent programme of mechanical and electrical (M&E) work which began in 2009, has addressed only 15% of the plant rooms that were at highest risk of system failure.

5.1 Why has only 15% of the M&E work been carried out?

These were the areas identified as being at highest risk of failure. This programme, costing over £72m and taking 10 years to complete, is merely a sticking plaster. The need to fundamentally overhaul the entire range of M&E services has not gone away and makes up approximately 74% of the total estimated cost of the Restoration and Renewal Programme. This includes the removal of all wall and floor coverings, ceiling and decorative features in every one of the Palace's 1100 rooms to access and replace hidden pipes and cables. Most of these systems are operating way past their expiry date, we still do not know exactly where many of the cables and pipes run (or whether they are still in use) and most of the services are buried within spaces too small and congested to access properly, often surrounded by asbestos. Even when taking the recent urgent works into account, a condition review completed in October 2015, that accessed over 500 systems, showed that the risk of system failure will increase by 90% over five years if nothing is done to address the problem.

5.2 Why can't we tackle the other 85% of plant rooms in the same way?

Replacing all our antiquated M&E is a painstaking, lengthy and costly process. This is because it can only be done in recess periods or at night, we don't have enough space to accommodate the contractors, access to the site is externally constrained, and we need to build temporary services from scratch while the old ones are being replaced. This leads to a high risk of existing plant failing before it is scheduled for completion, with the risk of service failure increasing the longer we leave it.

6. How much of a problem is the presence of asbestos in the Palace?

One of the biggest problems affecting the ability to repair and maintain the Palace is the presence of asbestos throughout the building. Asbestos was used extensively in the Palace, particularly during the post-war rebuilding period. It is now found in many areas, such as lagging and gaskets of pipework and ductwork, within insulation boards and fire linings, and even in some paint.

Asbestos fibres can spread to contaminate the huge and complex network of voids throughout the building, meaning that specialist and time-consuming asbestos removal procedures are necessary every time access to these spaces is needed. Many of the 98 distribution risers, all of which need to be refurbished as they carry services vertically between floors throughout the Palace, are severely congested and filled with asbestos. 'J' riser alone took five years to complete at a cost of £4 million.

A fracture in a confined space could lead to a sudden release of steam at high pressure and temperature which could destroy other services and potentially 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.

6.1 What happened during the recent Commons asbestos incident?

In 2015 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 ventilation to the Chamber, a small section of duct was inspected internally and asbestos dust was found to be present within it. Subsequent tests demonstrated that the risk was negligible on that occasion but the ventilation system's power has been turned down so as not to further disturb the asbestos in these ducts.

6.2 Do we have an asbestos survey?

Studies so far show that asbestos is believed to be present in almost every one of the 98 risers, as well as in many plant rooms, corridors and under-floor voids.

We have an asbestos register that details where asbestos is *known* to be present, and where asbestos cannot be removed the locations are inspected annually. A restoration and renewal programme cannot start until we have carried out a thorough intrusive asbestos survey across the entire Palace establishing, where practicable, exactly where most of the asbestos is. This would be followed by a painstaking and lengthy asbestos removal programme. A key consideration is ensuring the health and safety of construction workers being asked to work in such dangerous conditions.

7. How will fire safety systems be improved so that there is minimal risk of fire damage to the building?

When the Palace was rebuilt following the 1834 fire, Charles Barry used stone and iron instead of wood to counter the risk of another major fire. But when it came to the interiors, he and Pugin used vast quantities of highly combustible materials, and the huge network of ventilation shafts and floor voids designed to aid ventilation had the unintentional effect of creating ideal conditions for fire and smoke to sweep through the entire building.

Following the Windsor Castle fire in 1992, improved compartmentation was one of the measures recommended for all the Royal Palaces. Compartmentation between floors and walls slows the spread of fire or smoke by containing it within a single area or 'compartment' of a building. This work was begun in the 1990s but is incomplete due to its extremely intrusive nature and because the building is in constant use. It is also likely that high levels of asbestos – including in the voids behind the wood panelling of the Commons Chamber – will be found in the areas that need to be compartmentalised.

Other major work needs to be done to bring the Palace's fire safety systems in line with modern day standards; fire alarm cabling and systems are so antiquated that they fail regularly and replacement parts are no longer available. The poor disabled access in the Palace means emergency evacuation procedures for people with mobility impairments do not meet acceptable standards. It has been agreed with the Crown Premises Fire Inspection Group that certain essential works must be carried out by December 2018 to at least meet minimum life safety standards. At the moment, because the fire alarm system does not provide full cover, we rely on teams of fire safety officers to patrol the Palace 24 hours a day to spot any signs of fire. Some 60 incidents that had the potential to cause a serious fire have been recorded since 2008. A fire above one of the plant rooms earlier this year, which was caused by an old electrical cable catching fire, was only detected by chance. Had it occurred at night or at the weekend it is highly likely that it would have caused major damage.

Everything is being done to manage the risk of fire under these difficult circumstances, but Parliament is still at very high risk of a serious fire causing irreparable damage to the building or even a fatality. The current programme of improvements will still leave identified risks, including poor fire compartmentation and inadequate escape routes for disabled people.

A number of historic buildings have suffered the catastrophic effects of fire in recent years, including the Glasgow School of Art, the original Mackintosh building, which was severely damaged by fire in

2014. The fire, which began in the basement, rapidly spread upwards and, although it was brought under control quite quickly, huge damage was done to the historic studios and stairways. The renowned Mackintosh library was destroyed and the archive water damaged. The report from the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service found that the design of the building contributed greatly to the spread of the fire: "...the number of timber lined walls and voids, and original ventilation ducts running both vertically and horizontally throughout the building as well as "a vertical service void," which "ran the entire height of the building ...allowed flames, hot gases, and smoke to travel." This description closely matches the current condition of the Palace of Westminster. In addition, a fire suppression system which would have limited the spread of fire, was only part-installed. At Clendon Park, an 18th-century National Trust property, a comparable lack of fire compartmentation enabled the rapid spread of a fire caused by an electrical fault, leading to the collapse of the roof and 95% of the internal floors in 2015.

8. How many incidents of failure have there been?

From September 2014-September 2015, 8,500 problems were reported in the Palace. Of these, 3,576 included anything from flooded toilets and leaking pipes to broken door handles. There were 2,611 reported electrical faults and, since 2008, 60 incidents that had the potential to cause a serious fire have been recorded.

Some of the problems reported in this period (and earlier), include:

6 December 2016 – Strangers' Dining Room was affected by a power outage. An electrical circuit housed in the basement suffered failure and was subsequently switched off because it was unsafe to continue operation.

23 June 2016 – Flooding caused damage and disruption to the Palace and also to other buildings on the Parliamentary Estate. In the Palace, some basement offices had to be evacuated, there were power outages and water got into some fire alarm systems which prevented their reliable operation for several days.

13 August 2015 – rain water entering Central Lobby dome resulted in damage to an area of the ceiling and a significant section of Central Lobby being sectioned off to allow scaffolding to be erected.

20 August 2014 – water ingress into Victoria Tower basement corridor. Needed sump pumps and wet vacuums to clear. Electrical equipment was put at risk.

22 April 2014 – room on the West Front suffered leaking water from 2nd floor roof. Water penetrated smoke detector and fire alarm system affected.

9 April 2013 – total loss of steam pressure in Palace resulting in disruption to hot water and heating services. Boiler had failed but alarm to engineers had not triggered.

9. What issues within the Palace are likely to be addressed during Restoration and Renewal?

- Complete replacement of the antiquated heating, ventilation, electrical, water and drainage systems
- Installation of new fire safety systems
- Safe removal of asbestos
- Significantly improving disabled access in the Palace, which does not currently meet modern standards (many lifts were installed into Victorian stairwells and are not wide enough to take a wheelchair)
- Improving health and safety standards
- Extensive conservation and renewal of stonework
- Repairing the 3,800 bronze windows in the Palace
- Tackling the Palace internal plumbing requirements and pipework and guttering externally
- Replacing the sewage ejector system, which was installed in 1888 and is still in use
- Installing information and communication technology necessary for a 21st century Parliament
- Repairs and conservation work to the historic interiors which cannot be carried out between sittings of Parliament.

II – The recommended option

10. What were the Joint Committee's main recommendations?

The Joint Committee concluded unanimously that the lowest risk, most cost-effective and quickest option to undertake these essential works would be for everyone to move out of the Palace temporarily in one single phase. Alternative options were judged to hold an unacceptably high level of risk. They would cost significantly more and take much longer to complete.

The report contains a draft Motion recommending that a Sponsor Board and Delivery Authority be established as soon as possible. Once established, the Delivery Authority will produce a detailed business case. The next, detailed preparatory stage will ensure that taxpayers, as well as Government and Parliament, can be confident that the final proposal is the most cost-effective and will be deliverable before the final go-ahead is given for the works to start during the 2020 Parliament. This will then allow the final budgets to be approved by Parliament.

Subject to further feasibility work, value-for-money assessments and validation by the Sponsor Board and Delivery Authority, the Committee concluded that the best solution for temporary accommodation for the House of Commons would be one based around Richmond House (the Department of Health building on Whitehall) and the House of Commons' Northern Estate (which includes Portcullis House, Norman Shaw North, Norman Shaw South and 1 Parliament Street). The best solution for the House of Lords would be the establishment of a temporary Chamber and supporting offices in the Queen Elizabeth II Conference Centre.

11. How did the Committee decide on the options for temporary accommodation?

The Joint Committee recommended that temporary accommodation for both Houses should be located as close to the Parliamentary Estate as possible and make full use of existing buildings. The priorities were costs and security, so the Programme team was asked to work with the Government Property Unit to identify publicly-owned buildings that would be suitable for a temporary move. Feasibility studies assessed the suitability of various options including the River Thames, Horse Guards Parade, Westminster Hall and courtyards and car parks on the Parliamentary Estate. All were rejected, mainly on the grounds of cost and security. More information can be found in section 3 of the Joint Committee's report.

Richmond House was identified as providing suitable office accommodation, and potentially a temporary chamber for the House of Commons, while work to the Palace is being carried out. Ahead of this, Richmond House will provide office accommodation for the House of Commons while work to its Northern Estate is being carried out. One of its main advantages is that it is adjacent to the existing Parliamentary Estate, meaning extending the secure perimeter to include Richmond House will be a relatively straightforward process. The building is Grade II* listed and incorporates Nos. 1-8 Richmond Terrace, designed in 1819 by Thomas Chawner, and built in 1822-4 by George and Henry Harrison.

12. What is the cost of the Programme?

Full budgets have not yet been developed. However, it is *how* the work is conducted, rather than the nature of the work itself, which will be the principle factor in determining cost.

The cost of the recommended option is estimated at £3.52 billion - the total capital expenditure based on a P50 confidence level, at Q2 2014 prices, as reported in September 2014. Costs include inflation, risk, VAT and any temporary accommodation costs. The projected costs in the IOA are not programme budgets and more work on a design and Business Case will be required before a budget is established. The comparisons with the other options are set out as follows:

Option	Description	Timescale	Cost (£bn)*
1	Rolling programme of phased works and decant in 13 phases, working around continued use of the Palace of Westminster	25–40 years, most likely 32 years (P50)	£5.67
2	Two-phase approach, with each House moving in turn to temporary accommodation, and closure of broadly half the Palace in each phase	9–14 years, most likely 11 years (P50)	£4.42
3	Full decant, single phase	5–8 years, most likely 6 years (P50)	£3.52

13. Why is the full move out option considered to be the best one?

The principal benefits of a single-phase, full-decant approach are:

- The work can be completed, and the benefits realised, in the shortest possible time
- In particular, the risk of disruption due to systems failures in the Palace would be fully mitigated at the earliest possible opportunity, when the building is empty, rather than, as under the other options, when the work is complete
- The risk of the building work disrupting the business of Parliament will be minimised
- The risk of time and cost over-runs caused by the need to suspend work to avoid disrupting the business of Parliament will be minimised
- Total capital expenditure, including decant costs, will be minimised, and
- It will provide the greatest scope for delivering further improvements to the operation of the building, some of which could be introduced at very little cost.

14. What are the main disadvantages of the partial move out or rolling programme options?

The Joint Committee explored the partial move out option in significant detail during its Inquiry and concluded: *With the Palace split in two, site logistics would be a challenge. There would be significant risks which would be difficult to manage, including security, fire, 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 and that it 'could turn out to combine the worst of all options.'* (Extract from report, p.50)

Any option which involves continued occupation of the Palace during the works would involve a number of significant risks:

- It is common, at the moment, for construction and maintenance work in the Palace to be suspended because of an unexpected impact on the work of Parliament
- Under either Option 1 or Option 2, work which was heavier and noisier than current business-as-usual maintenance would be taking place in much closer proximity to the Chambers, committee rooms and Members' offices
- There would be significant security challenges of managing an active building site, with multiple deliveries and many hundreds of contractors, in the same building as a working Parliament
- The current absence of adequate fire compartmentation (which the Programme aims to remedy) would be a further source of fire and security risk
- The complexity and chaotic nature of the historic mechanical and electrical installations mean that the risk of essential services to the "live" part of the building being inadvertently disconnected would be very high, and
- The projected timescale for Option 1 (the "rolling programme" option) is longer than the expected lifecycle of many of the new systems which would be installed, meaning that it would in effect never be completed.

15. What would this mean in practice?

Partial move out

Under this scenario the House of Commons would 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. 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.

Turning half the Palace into a building site would create significant security problems and run the ever-present risk that Parliament's business would be disrupted by, for example, somebody slicing through the wrong pipe or wire, cutting off power, water, heating or ventilation; or by increased activations of the fire alarm; or by traffic congestion around the building site. There would also be risks to the safety of occupants given the Palace is riddled with asbestos.

Rolling programme

The rolling programme of works over 32 years could take place over so long a time that there becomes a *'high risk of existing plant failing before it could be reached in the sequence of works.'* The IOA states that the rolling programme would cause *'excessive nuisance'* for occupants of the Palace, including noise, dust and general contractor presence. The rolling programme would deliver: *'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, and of meeting space.'*

Both Chambers would still need to be relocated elsewhere on the Estate, for between two to four years each, at separate points in the programme of works. The challenges, and inconvenience, in providing 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, are enormous. Furthermore, there would be significant security and safety risks to overcome.

16. Why can't a temporary Chamber be installed in Westminster Hall?

The Joint Committee considered but ruled out this option on the grounds that the structure and fabric of the 11th Century Hall would make it very vulnerable to damage. It is not known what effect heating the Hall may have on the 14th century hammer-beam roof or the effect the added weight a fully occupied Chamber may have on the Hall's floor and structure. Its location adjacent to the main construction site would create significant noise, disruption and security risks. The need to replace M&E services running underneath the Hall and its adjoining rooms means that it would in any case need to be closed for a period of time.

17. Why can't the Treasury building be used?

For both Houses, it might be necessary to acquire additional office space, and the Joint Committee suggested that part of 100 Parliament Street, currently home to HMRC, could be used for this purpose. However, the Joint Committee ruled out this building for MPs' accommodation mainly on security grounds as it cannot be brought within the secure boundary.

18. Why can't MPs sit in the Lords Chamber and Peers sit in the Royal Gallery while works take place?

The Joint Committee considered this option to be impracticable for a number of reasons, and both Chambers will in any case need to be vacated for 2-4 years to allow essential repairs to be carried out. It is very likely that this option would cost in excess of £900 million more than the Joint Committee's recommended option and main works would take around 15 years to complete, compared to six years for the Joint Committee's recommendation. There would need to be a two-year enabling phase before 2023 to fit out the Royal Gallery as a Chamber, establish temporary

mechanical, electrical and public health systems to isolate all these areas from the rest of the building and build temporary supporting accommodation and facilities in Old Palace Yard.

The Chambers do not function independently from the rest of the building. The Palace has one drain, one high pressure steam heating system, and one high voltage electricity wires and gas network. All of them serve the Chambers and have to be taken out and replaced. The Royal Gallery also has no division lobbies nor space to create them. The number of divisions is far higher than in the 1940s. Between 24 June 1941 and the end of the war in 1945 there were just 14 divisions in the Lords. Last year there were 113 divisions. Between the First and Second World War, the average attendance in the House of Lords was 35. During the last session, 2015-16, it was 497. The seating area in the Lords Chamber is also smaller than the Commons. The number of seats in the Commons Chamber is 363, compared to 230 - 250 in the Lords Chamber.

The other most significant risks based on this option include:

- Risk of damage to the structure and fabric of the Royal Gallery
- Significant restrictions on public access for up to 15 years, if not more
- Construction works are likely to cause an unacceptable degree of noise and disturbance to the business of Parliament
- Essential Parliamentary functions and facilities, such as Chambers, committee rooms, Whips' and Members' offices, catering, offices for clerks, police officers, doorkeepers, and bathrooms would need to be located some distance away from the area, and
- Significant fire and security implications, including emergency escape routes for Parliament, which would require crossing the building zone and *vice versa*.

19. What evidence is there to back up the Joint Committee's recommendations?

Several independent, expert reports commissioned over the last 15 years have confirmed that proper remediation would be difficult to achieve while the building remained in use. An internal [Pre-Feasibility Study](#) confirmed that a more radical approach was probably inevitable. An [Independent Options Appraisal](#) (IOA) commissioned from a consortium led by Deloitte Real Estate and including AECOM and HOK set out a range of options for carrying out the work, including a rolling programme.

The Joint Committee on the Palace of Westminster spent a year considering the IOA's findings, subjecting them to rigorous scrutiny and commissioning additional work on options not included in the IOA. The Committee concluded, partly on the basis of expert advice from bodies such as the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA), the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS), and the Chartered Institution of Building Services Engineers (CIBSE) that any other course of action would involve an unacceptable risk to security and systems and that costs and timescales would over-run. Without exception, these bodies believe there is a high likelihood that attempting to undertake the programme *in situ* in the middle of a construction site would lead to an unplanned move, with significant practical and financial implications. Parliament would potentially need to carry out an emergency evacuation for a period of weeks, months or even years.

20. What will be the wider economic benefits to the country?

The scale of the work now needed is such that it will certainly create jobs for the duration of the Programme. Given the numerous specialist skills that will be required, the supply chain will need to involve many small and medium-sized companies and the economic opportunities are therefore likely to extend across the whole of the UK. The more limited current projects to restore encaustic tiles, which are being made in Shropshire, and the cast iron roofs, which are being refurbished in Yorkshire, already provide good evidence for this. Mobilising skills for the restoration of the Palace will require an investment in training and apprenticeships which should create a skills legacy.

21. Is there merit in the floating Parliament idea?

The Joint Committee considered and rejected the idea of a temporary structure on the River Thames on the grounds of security, size, access, and noise and nuisance (p.60). Parliament was not involved in producing the Gensler design.

22. Why can't Parliament tour the country while the Palace is being renovated?

The additional costs to the taxpayer would be very high – Parliament would essentially also need to provide a significant amount of temporary accommodation for Members, their staff and staff of both Houses and, since Parliament is dependent on having ready access to Ministers, much of the machinery of Whitehall would need to move with Parliament.

23. Why can't we turn it into a museum and build a new Parliament elsewhere?

Unless Parliament is prepared to see it fall into terminal disrepair, the Palace would need to be renovated whatever its use. This idea would mean spending taxpayers' money doing that *and* building a new Parliament.

24. What are other Parliaments faced with similar problems doing?

Other Parliament buildings of the same age as the Palace of Westminster have found themselves facing similar problems in recent years, and many have opted to move out while renovation work takes place. In 2017, the Austrian Parliament will move to temporary accommodation while its main building is refurbished. The Finnish Parliament is currently meeting in a concert hall while refurbishment of the Parliament House takes place. From 2018 to 2023, the Canadian House of Commons will sit in a temporary structure in a courtyard of one of its other buildings.

25. Where/how will MPs meet their constituents during Restoration and Renewal?

The Joint Committee emphasised that it was *"obviously essential that the public should have continuous access to Parliamentary proceedings"* during the Programme, and recommended that temporary accommodation should be designed so as to allow space for members of the public to meet their elected representatives. Designs for Richmond House will be developed on the basis of those recommendations.

26. Will the temporary Chambers look the same?

The Joint Committee recommended that:

- The general floor space and layout of the two Chambers should be replicated as far as possible in temporary accommodation
- The fixtures and fittings do not need to be as elaborate as the current Chambers and should be designed to minimise unnecessary cost, and
- The division lobbies should, as far as possible, be replicated, but consideration might need to be given to configuring the division lobbies differently, if necessary.

Members will be consulted on the design and layout if they agree the Joint Committee's principal recommendations.

27. Will the Chambers in a restored Palace look the same?

The Joint Committee made no specific recommendations on design of the Chambers. Members will be consulted on any proposed changes.

28. Will the public still be able to watch parliamentary proceedings in person?

Yes. However, space in the public galleries may have to be temporarily reduced. In the longer term, the Programme offers the scope to make significant improvements to public access to the Chambers and public galleries. All proceedings in both Chambers, Westminster Hall, the Moses Room, and most committee meetings, are broadcast live at www.parliamentlive.tv.

29. Where will additional select committee rooms be provided?

Options are being developed, but they will be provided within the secure perimeter, within easy reach of Members' offices and the temporary Chambers.

30. What are the plans for ceremonial events?

The Joint Committee noted that some ceremonial events might need to be adapted while both Houses are in temporary accommodation. It may also be necessary for some events to be held in alternative locations. Together with appropriate stakeholders we are confident that it will be possible to make suitably dignified alternative arrangements during any temporary move.

31. What will happen to the Education Centre in Victoria Tower Gardens while the work is happening?

The current Education Centre building is a temporary structure. There is a clear commitment to continuing our education and outreach service and the options for providing this during the works are currently being explored. We are also looking at the long term legacy of education, archives and a visitor centre after the restoration and renewal is complete.

III. Accountability and Governance

32. What governance arrangements will be put in place to ensure the Programme is managed properly?

Given the size and complexity of the Programme, the Joint Committee has stressed the need for strong governance to ensure value for money for the taxpayer. The Joint Committee recommended the creation of a two-tier governance structure, similar to that adopted for the 2012 Olympic Games and the Crossrail project. A Sponsor Board, to include representatives from both Houses, Government, and civil society, should be established as soon as possible to oversee its delivery and to keep the Programme on target for an early 2020s start date. The Sponsor Board would oversee the work of an arms-length Delivery Authority. The Committee recommends that the Delivery Authority's first tasks should be to validate its conclusion that the best way to conduct the work would be in a single phase, requiring a full, temporary move from the Palace, and to begin work on a design brief for the Programme.

33. How will you ensure value for money?

A formal business case process is being followed, in line with Treasury guidelines. Cost will be challenged, and there will be regular reviews of the Programme in line with the practice established by the Government's Infrastructure and Projects Authority (IPA). All expenditure will be audited internally and by the National Audit Office and the proposed delivery option will be subject to further validation by the Delivery Authority.

34. How will the Delivery Authority be held to account?

The Delivery Authority will be accountable to the Sponsor Board. An agreement will set out the parameters within which the Delivery Authority must perform and any consequences of failure.

35. How will the architects and construction firms be chosen?

Parliament follows Treasury-recommended public procurement guidelines that are designed to ensure transparency and value for money. While firms will be chosen on the key criteria of price and quality, we expect that many of the specialist skills will be provided through British firms as is currently the case in the Palace (examples include the cast iron roof works, encaustic tile repair and replacement, and Westminster Hall stone conservation).

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