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Committee of Public Accounts

Restoration and Renewal of Parliament

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to the report*

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The Committee of Public Accounts

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Summary

For decades there has been broad consensus around the critical need to restore and renew the Palace of Westminster, an iconic UNESCO world heritage site of great historical, cultural and political significance. This is our second report on this essential, multi-billion pound, infrastructure programme.

Progress is not only unacceptably slow, but the likely start date for major works has been pushed back by many years because of repeated attempts to revisit the basis of the programme. Although some urgent works could be undertaken earlier, there is still no clear indication of when major works may start. Recent decisions to remove the Sponsor Body have created significant uncertainty and value for money risk. Nugatory spending, including £140 million to install temporary fire safety systems, is already evident. The uncertainty over progress and the lack of clarity over what will replace the Sponsor Body means skills and expertise critical to the Programme are already being lost.

Recent events have not demonstrated the transparency, openness, accountability, or evidence-based decision-making we expect. There is an unacceptable cloak of secrecy around the programme. The House authorities' failure to manage asbestos incidents transparently, or with alacrity, underlines an approach which does not welcome scrutiny. Added to this, we saw no evidence to justify the House of Commons Commission's initial proposal to abolish the Sponsor Body, a decision which reverses decisions made by both Houses of Parliament. Its suggestion that the House authorities oversee the works does not seem viable given their historical performance with Portcullis House and more recently the Elizabeth Tower renovation, which is almost triple its original £29 million budget.

Given this backdrop, and the question of what a restored Palace will look like still unanswered, the programme is at a critical juncture. Parliament's Accounting Officers need to fulfil their role by setting out publicly what they can feasibly deliver. Transparent, evidence-based decisions must be made quickly to avoid further unnecessary cost to the taxpayer and prevent putting the safety of this iconic building and those that work in it and visit it at even greater risk. Nearly 200 years ago a fire destroyed part of this building – we do not want it to take another catastrophic incident to finally galvanise action and focus minds.

Introduction

After more than 20 years of discussion, in early 2018, Parliament voted to undertake critical works to restore and renew the Palace of Westminster and improve facilities. The resulting legislation, the Parliamentary Buildings (Restoration and Renewal) Act 2019 (the Act), created a Sponsor Body, overseeing a Delivery Authority, responsible for the Restoration and Renewal Programme (the Programme). It was agreed that both Houses would move out during the work (known as a full decant).

Until February 2022, the Sponsor Body and Delivery Authority were preparing a business case for Parliament to approve before summer 2023. In January 2022, roughly half-way through preparing the business case, the Sponsor Body shared with the House Commissions indicative cost and schedule estimates for the essential (cheaper) option being developed. This found works would last 19 to 28 years at a cost of £7 billion to £13 billion in current day prices, with the Palace being decanted in the 2030s and returning to normal use in the 2040s or 2050s. It also shared a study examining the impact of the House of Commons retaining a chamber and some additional functions in the Palace throughout the works (known as continued presence). This found that continued presence could increase the timescale of the work by up to 48 years to 76 years and the cost by £11 billion to £22 billion.

In February 2022, the House of Commons Commission decided to propose changes to the governance and approach to the work. There has, as yet, been limited detail on how or why this decision, which overturned a vote of the House of Commons, was made. Following concerns over the indicative costs and timescales, and how the programme governance operated, on 18 March the Commons and Lords Commissions issued a joint statement proposing changes. They subsequently reiterated their position in a report published 14 June 2022, which they published after considering recommendations from an independent, expert panel. That panel was established after the House of Commons Commission's decision and at a point where confidence had already been lost and Sponsor Body staff were moving on. The panel noted that such governance changes were only likely to introduce more risks and that the governance model would need to be considered again if, and when, the programme decides how it will actually deliver. The 14 June report set out the Commissions intention to ignore a previous decision of Parliament and ask the Houses to vote for changes which include to prioritise certain safety critical work; consider options for phasing works; and revising governance arrangements.

After being agreed by the Commissions, any changes must be approved by both Houses first by indicative resolutions, followed by a draft affirmative instrument. The Commissions currently plan to seek a vote on the works and changes to the sponsorship function before the 2022 summer recess, with legislative instruments drafted in autumn.

Conclusions and recommendations

1. **The considerable uncertainty facing the Programme has caused a loss of the critical skills needed to develop the business case, created delays and increased the risk of nugatory spending and health and safety incidents.** Since the start of 2016, there have been 25 fire incidents within the Palace, and 13 incidents of falling masonry, in addition to numerous incidents that have disrupted the work of the House, for example, the Chamber having to suspend due to a leak in the ceiling. The House authorities have spent large amounts of taxpayers' money to mitigate health and safety risks, with £140 million on temporary fire safety improvements alone. The House of Commons Commission's proposal to dissolve the Sponsor Body and change the approach creates further delays. Most work has been paused until a way forward has been agreed, with the Sponsor Body's main estimate for 2022–23 necessarily having to be based on a series of assumptions about the work to be carried out over the year. Also, both the Sponsor Body and the Delivery Authority has lost staff and technical expertise, with the Sponsor Body CEO and several directors resigning. The Clerk of the House of Commons concedes that there is considerable experience in the Sponsor Body which they did not want to lose, and that the uncertainty is damaging. On 26 May 2022, the Sponsor Body announced that Dr Patsy Richards would take up post as interim Chief Executive Officer in the “coming weeks” and in June 2022 the Commissions set out their intention to transfer Sponsor Body staff to Parliament “with all reasonable speed”.

Recommendation: *As soon as possible, the Clerks should:*

- *commit to meet the indicative timeframe set out by the Commissions to resolve uncertainties around how the Programme will be governed and the work to be undertaken. This should involve engaging all parties, such as domestic parliamentary committees, and setting interim milestones; and*
- *set out how they will recruit and retain the skills and expertise they recognise is needed to deliver the Programme.*

During this period of uncertainty, the Sponsor Body, Delivery Authority and House authorities should set out a clear plan and structure as to how they will manage the short-term risks to value for money to avoid nugatory expenditure.

2. **The House of Commons Commission proposed to dissolve the Sponsor Body without considering why governance arrangements did not work and potential alternatives, including whether the House administrations can satisfactorily oversee work.** Following a discussion of the indicative cost and schedule estimates and a continued presence assessment, the Commission proposed that the sponsor function should transfer to a “new, separate department serving both Houses”. This Department will in effect become the client sponsor for the entire project. The CEO of the Sponsor Body does not know why the Commission proposed dissolving the Sponsor Body. There is no evidence alternative options were considered. It is unclear whether the House administrations have the capacity and skills to sponsor the works. Their poor management contributed to the Elizabeth Tower refurbishment cost almost tripling from £29 million and their response to the recent asbestos incident was not managed to the standard we expect. There is no

evidence that the Clerk of the House and the Clerk of the Parliaments have either the expertise or the capacity to successfully oversee a large infrastructure project of this cost and complexity. In June 2022, an independent review panel, convened by the Commissions, recommended other governance options be considered for the programme delivery phase, although bringing the sponsor function in-house “should be viewed as a practical measure” in the short-term. It also recommended any new client or sponsorship function should retain the necessary capability and capacity alongside a distinct identity. It should have a dedicated leader appointed as Senior Responsible Owner reporting to the Clerks of both Houses as Accounting Officers.

Recommendation: *Given the lack of time to consider the viability of options, Parliament should consider appropriate governance arrangements for the delivery phase and ensure they have evidence to support decision-making by:*

- *being explicit about why the Commission concluded that existing arrangements have not worked and therefore what issues revised arrangements must address; and*
- *considering the viability and detail of other governance arrangements, including the House administrations, drawing on past performance and an understanding of skills and capabilities.*

3. **Critical value for money risks, which we have previously highlighted, have still not been addressed.** The NAO’s January 2022 report found that risks we identified in our October 2020 report remained. This included the Sponsor Body managing factors outside its control, with the most significant interdependent projects delayed or paused. For example, the Clerk of the House told us the Commons does not yet have a plan to accommodate itself elsewhere during the work. It wrote-off £70 million when the Commons decided not to pursue the decant plans it had developed. Critically though, despite risks to building political consensus, the question on how to secure and retain consensus across Parliament on what a restored Palace will look like remains unanswered. There is disagreement among MPs on how the work should be done and this is a major cause of the delays on the project over many years. The Commissions’ recent decision to revisit the Programme’s mandate set by Parliament in 2018 demonstrates the challenges of building a single, long-term view. The Clerk of the House of Commons considers that bringing the client function in-house could help establish consensus on a way forward and mitigate risks. We see no evidence for why this will ensure continuity of purpose. In June 2022, the Commissions endorsed the independent expert panel’s recommendation to develop and agree a long-term vision and outcomes. Until Parliament decides what it wants, and sticks to it, it will be almost impossible for any sponsor to deliver any programme. Particularly as the composition and therefore the view of Parliament itself can change at least every five years, which is precisely why the Sponsor Body was set up by the Act to take the oversight of this huge project out of the political arena.

Recommendation: *The Clerks should set out how they will ensure the relevant authorities address the recommendations made in previous PAC and NAO reports, in particular:*

- *that Parliament should put in place clear structures to provide a single set of objectives and requirements that brings together perspectives (a long-term vision) from both Houses.*
- *that the risks of interdependent programmes, such as accommodation for the House of Commons during the works, should be effectively managed.*

4. **The Commissions have asked for further options to be explored but is unclear how the higher costs, greater duration and added risks, including extraordinary health and safety risks, of a continued presence during the building works can be managed.** The Delivery Authority told us in March that although it is technically possible to plan for options involving some element of continued presence, this would lead to higher costs, take an enormously longer time (an extra 15 to 48 years), and create extraordinary health and safety risks. It may also require changes to the way Parliament operates. Initial work found Parliament operating alongside a construction site would lead to potentially unacceptable disruption, noise and fire risk. It would also increase the potential for exposure to airborne asbestos which will require extensive works to remove. The Delivery Authority is currently letting the contracts for intrusive surveys, having undertaken initial investigations. The House of Commons Trade Union believes that “the ongoing viability of the Palace of Westminster as a safe workplace is at stake and ... anything less than the full decant envisaged under the Act would put that at risk”. When asked, the Clerks could not clearly answer if they could manage the risks to users of the building should the House of Commons maintain a presence in the Palace during the works. The Clerk of the House of Commons recognises there will need to be a full decant for some time at least.

Recommendation: The Clerks should set out the threshold of risk they are willing to accept during the works and report back on this level of risk, the trade-offs they feel are possible and how this impacts the potential approach to work.

The Delivery Authority should progress the intrusive surveys during the summer to determine what the asbestos removal plan should be, including whether it is safe to remain in the Palace whilst these works take place.

5. **To date, there has been a failure of transparency and accountability over work to restore and renew the Palace.** This includes: the House administrations being three months late sharing, in line with expected standards, information on a recent asbestos incident with those impacted; the Sponsor Body choosing not to consult the domestic committees within Parliament; and Parliament not being clearly informed of the Sponsor Body’s CEO’s resignation. Our work across major programmes has illustrated the importance of establishing the right culture for transparency. The House of Commons Commission decided to propose dissolving the Sponsor Body directly after considering early cost and schedule information prepared by the Sponsor Body (which it found concerning). Unless the justification for this decision is now made clear, it could set a damaging ‘good news culture’.

Recommendations: *To maintain effective transparency over the Programme:*

- *Measures should be put in place by the Programme’s Accounting Officers to ensure the programme sponsor reports regularly to Parliament on progress, including information on the potential costs and risks estimates and any associated uncertainties.*
- *The Commissions of both Houses should publish and place in their respective Libraries all minutes and advice documents supporting decisions relating to the programme, as well as the interdependent and wider works across the Parliamentary Estate.*
- *The Delivery Authority should include engagement with parliamentary domestic committees as a critical stage in any future timetables.*
- *Urgently, and at the latest before works commence, the Clerks of both Houses should review and improve processes to guarantee health and safety incidents are reported as soon as possible to those accountable for safety and those potentially affected by incidents.*
- *The Government must be clearly engaged with the overall strategy and costs of the entire R&R project.*

6. **The Parliamentary Accounting Officers have not made clear whether the House authorities can deliver the work envisaged by Parliament.** We are concerned that the Clerks may feel constrained in sharing their professional views as Accounting and Corporate officers on what is deliverable. For government programmes, Accounting Officers must assess the delivery risks, publishing a summary of these, and seek a ministerial direction should they consider what they are being asked to do is undeliverable. In January 2020 the Speaker of the House established a new procedure, modelled on Accounting Officers’ ability to seek a ministerial direction, allowing the Clerk of the House to place a statement of his views in the House of Commons Library, if he feels a decision taken by the Speaker comprises either a substantial breach of the Standing Orders, or a departure from long-established conventions, without authorisation by the House itself.¹

The Clerks have not shared their views on what work could be delivered. The Commissions convened an independent panel to provide them with advice and assurance on both the governance options and proposed approach to the work. The Commissions considered the independent panel’s review in June 2022, subsequently publishing this as part of a joint report setting out areas the Houses would be invited to vote on.

Recommendations: *Given their roles as Accounting and Corporate Officers, the Clerks should make available to Members their expert advice on the future programme governance and the viability of different approach to the works. Should the Clerks be tasked with delivering a programme which they cannot assure themselves is value for money, or the best use of taxpayers’ funds, then following the principle of transparency set out by the Speaker in January 2020,*

¹ [Letter from the Speaker, Sir Lindsay Hoyle, to the Clerk of the House, Dr John Benger, January 29, 2020](#)

they should write to the Commons and Lords Commissions laying out their assessment and seek formal instruction whether to proceed. This correspondence should be published.

In relation to any continuing independent advice sought to support decision-making, they should:

- *set out how they will ensure that the panel is both independent and objective and can also access the information it needs.*
- *commit to publishing and placing in the House of Commons Library any advice obtained and how they have responded to any recommendations.*

1 Overseeing the works

1. On the basis of a report by the Comptroller and Auditor General, we took evidence on the restoration and renewal of the Palace of Westminster (the Palace) from the Sponsor Body Chief Executive Officer, the Delivery Authority Chief Executive, the Clerk of the House and the Clerk of the Parliaments.² We took evidence over the course of two committee sessions; on the 14 March 2022 and then on 11 May 2022.

2. For decades there has been broad consensus around the critical need to restore and renew the Palace, an iconic UNESCO world heritage site of great historical, cultural and political significance. After over 20 years of discussion, in January 2018, Parliament resolved to undertake these works and improve facilities. Through legislation (the 2019 Parliamentary Buildings (Restoration and Renewal) Act 2019) Parliament established a Sponsor Body, overseeing a Delivery Authority, responsible for the Restoration and Renewal Programme (the Programme) with the Houses moving out during the work (a full decant). This replaced a joint House of Commons and House of Lords team and changed Parliament's role with it now funding and approving the work of the Sponsor Body rather than running the Programme itself.³

3. Since being established in spring 2020, in addition to the costs of being set up, the Sponsor Body and Delivery Authority have spent £145.5 million to develop themselves and start work on a business case for the works.⁴ In January 2022, roughly half-way through preparing the business case, the Sponsor Body shared with the House Commissions provisional cost and schedule estimates for an essential (cheaper) option for delivering the Programme.⁵ This indicative information found works would last 19 to 28 years at a cost of £7 billion to £13 billion in current day prices. The Palace would be decanted in the 2030s and return to normal use in the 2040s or 2050s. It also found that should work be undertaken with a continued presence, this would cost between £11 billion to £22 billion in current day prices, and would take up to 76 years.⁶ The single largest cost would be to preserve the Palace through replacing obsolete building services, conserving the building fabric, improving fire protection and removing asbestos.⁷ Removing asbestos will require significant work – since August 2017 there have been six asbestos incidents in the Palace, of which two were reported to the Health and Safety Executive.⁸

4. In February 2022, one week after they had received the provisional cost and schedule estimates, the House of Commons Commission proposed significant changes to the Programme. This included to the governance, including the dissolution of the Sponsor Body, and also considering other options for the work that did not involve a full decant during the works.⁹ The House of Lords Commission agreed the proposed changes subject to caveats.¹⁰ In a March 2022 joint statement, the Commissions outlined their intention

2 C&AG's Report, *Restoration and Renewal of the Palace of Westminster: Progress update*, Session 2021–22, HC 1016, 21 January 2022

3 C&AG's Report, paras 1.2, 1.3, 1.5–1.6; C&AG's Report, *Palace of Westminster Restoration and Renewal Programme*, Session 2019–2021, HC 315, 24 April 2020, paras 5 and 2.29

4 C&AG's Report, paras 1.13

5 House of Commons Commission, [Decisions](#), 24 January 2022

6 HC49 Q58; [RRP0001](#)

7 Sponsor Body, [Restoration and Renewal Programme: Essential Scheme: initial assessment of cost and schedule; and continued presence: impact study](#), DEP2022–0145, 23 February 2022

8 [Letter from Dr John Bengler, 29 March 2022](#)

9 House of Commons Commission, [Decisions](#), 1 February 2022

10 House of Lords Commission, [Minutes](#), 8 February 2022

for “a revised mandate for the works and changes to the sponsorship function will be sought from the two Houses... before the [2022] summer recess”.¹¹ Any changes, after being agreed by the Commissions, must be approved by both Houses through indicative resolutions, then a draft affirmative instrument to amend the legislation.¹² The Clerk of the House of Commons told us that these instruments would have to be approved by both Houses to have legal effect and, unless and until such approval was secured, the status quo would prevail and Sponsor Body will remain.¹³ On 14 June, after we had taken oral evidence, the Commissions published a joint report setting out the specific areas where they would seek the support from both Houses. This related to a new mandate for the works and a new governance structure. The report reflected findings from an independent, expert review undertaken in May 2022.¹⁴ The Commissions currently plan to hold debates in both Houses before summer 2022 with legislative instruments drafted in autumn.

Uncertainty over the programme

5. Until February 2022, the Sponsor Body and Delivery Authority were preparing a business case to go to Parliament for approval by summer 2023. This would present two options of different levels of ambition, with work undertaken in phases and the Palace being empty for some of the time. In November 2021, the Sponsor Body assessed the risk of a delay to presenting Parliament a business case in early 2023 as ‘high’.¹⁵

6. The March 2022 Joint Commissions’ statement created uncertainties over what work could be undertaken now, and what the future governance arrangements would look like. The Delivery Authority told us that, as a result, it paused developing the business case, which stopped a large amount of its work. In May 2022, the Clerks told us that they had written to the Sponsor Body asking them to undertake only options-neutral work which would add value regardless as to what future option chosen.¹⁶ Due to this uncertainty, the Sponsor Body’s spending estimate for 2022–23 (£87 million) was prepared at considerable speed and necessarily based on a series of assumptions about the work to be carried out during the year.¹⁷

7. The Clerk of the House told us that every year the restoration and renewal of the Palace is delayed adds risk and cost such as through nugatory spending.¹⁸ In 2014, an independent assessment found delays to the decision may add between £60 million and £85 million per year (in 2014 prices) to the capital costs in additional tender price inflation.¹⁹ He explained that the House administrations have undertaken works to mitigate health and safety risks, including spending around £140 million on temporary fire safety improvements and around £8 million on temporary sewerage. They have also started repairs to the outside of the Victoria Tower.²⁰ The Clerk of the Parliaments told

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

12 HC1100 Q 88; HC49 Q 27

13 HC49 Qq 27–28

14 [Joint report from the House of Commons and House of Lords Commissions](#), 14 June 2022

15 C&AG’s Report, paras 7, 9, 3.10 and Figure 4

16 HC1100 Q 135; HC49 Q 45

17 [Main Estimate Memorandum: Parliamentary Works Sponsor Body](#), page 2

18 HC1100 Qq 110, 153, 214

19 HC1100Q 162; Deloitte, [Palace of Westminster Restoration and Renewal Programme Independent Options Appraisal](#), 8 September 2014, section 1.9

20 HC1100 Qq 110, 153, 214

us that, even prior to the statement of the Joint Commission, all internal works had been subject to an “R&R test” to determine whether they would become nugatory under the restoration and renewal plans.²¹

8. Since the start of 2016, there have been 25 fire incidents within the Palace and 13 incidents of falling masonry.²² Nearly two hundred years ago, in 1834, the historic Palace was destroyed by a fire following delay restoring the building.²³

9. In May 2022, the Clerk of the House of Commons told us that this period of uncertainty was “highly corrosive and damaging” for retaining the vital expertise needed to develop the Programme.²⁴ This echoed the Delivery Authority’s comments to us in March, that there was a significant risk it would lose the expertise, capability and skills built up over the last 18 months. This includes those working within the organisations and contractors who have worked on the programme for an extended period and built-up expertise of the Palace’s unique challenges.²⁵ Since May 2020, both the Sponsor Body and the Delivery Authority have expanded with staff increases of 40% and 74% respectively, which includes a fall in the number of interim staff used.²⁶

10. In March 2022, the Delivery Authority had already lost some newly recruited staff and access to technical contractor expertise. Then, in May 2022, the CEO of the Sponsor Body announced her resignation, along with two other senior members of Sponsor Body staff.²⁷ The Clerk of the House of Commons told us that retaining some of the Sponsor Body’s “very considerable expertise” was vital to successfully restoring the Palace.²⁸ He told us that should the Sponsor Body be abolished under the Act, the legislation requires staff to be transferred to any successor body when the statutory instrument came into effect.²⁹ In its June 2022 report, the Commissions recommended that all Sponsor Body staff be transferred to the in-house team “with all reasonable speed in order to end the current period of uncertainty”.³⁰ As no decision has yet been taken, neither the House of Commons nor House of Lords plan to include contingent liabilities in their accounts to reflect these future costs.³¹ On 26 May 2022, the Sponsor Body announced that an interim Chief Executive, Dr Patsy Richards, would take up post in the “coming weeks”.³²

11. We questioned the Clerk of the House of Commons on the timeframes and Parliamentary processes required to make any changes and provide more certainty. He told us that the House Commissions had sought additional assurance work ahead of a June 2022 joint meeting to agree a report setting out their reasoning to Members of both Houses. On 14 June, the Commissions published their joint report setting out the issues to be voted on by the Houses. This considered the findings of the assurance work, with the independent expert review panel’s report as an annex.

21 HC49 Q31

22 [Letter from Dr John Benger, 29 March 2022](#)

23 HC 49 Qq 92–93; C&AG’s Report, *Palace of Westminster Restoration and Renewal Programme*, Session 2019–21, HC 315, 24 April 2022

24 HC49 Q 18

25 HC1100 Q 49

26 C&AG’s Report, para 2.4

27 HC1100 Q 157, HC49 Q 20

28 HC49 Q 18

29 HC49 Q 21

30 [Joint report from the House of Commons and House of Lords Commissions](#), 14 June 2022, page 11

31 [Joint correspondence from the Clerk of the House of Commons and Clerk of the Parliaments](#), 20 May 2022

32 [Press notice from the Sponsor Body](#) 26 March 2022

12. The Commissions intend to put indicative resolutions based on this report to Members and Peers before the summer 2022 recess. The Clerk of the House explained that formalising the Commissions' proposal would require the Leader of the House of Commons to lay an affirmative instrument before both Houses to be debated.³³ The Parliamentary Buildings (Restoration and Renewal) Act 2019 requires the Leader of the House of Lords to agree for the instrument to be laid and certain parties, including both Clerks and both Commissions, to be informed.³⁴

13. The Sponsor Body told us it has not estimated the costs associated with dissolving itself, which will depend on what the changes to the governance arrangements and proposed work look like. Depending on their grade, its staff have notice periods of between three and 12 months.³⁵ The independent expert review reported that making structural changes to major programmes, such as revising governance, often introduced new risks. Care needed to be taken to avoid decisions simply compounding issues that already existed.³⁶

Changing the Programme's governance

14. In February 2022, the House of Commons Commission proposed that the sponsor function should transfer to a “new, separate department serving both Houses”, with its head formally accountable to the Clerk of the House or the Clerks of both Houses and ultimately to the Commissions.³⁷ The House of Lords Commission supported this proposal but not until further considerations on what should replace the Sponsor Body, based on independent advice and assurance, had taken place.³⁸ A meeting of both Commissions in March 2022 agreed this approach.

15. On 14 June 2022, the Commissions published the areas where they sought the Houses agreement. This included that the Sponsor Body should be replaced, and that the sponsorship function, now termed client function, would be brought in-house to Parliament for these early programme stages. In practice, the Clerks of the two Houses would take over responsibility for the sponsor function as Accounting Officers, with the Delivery Authority unchanged. They proposed a two-tier governance structure including a client board, bringing together the two Commissions, and a small programme board as a joint board of the two Houses with delegated authority from the Client Board.³⁹

16. The Clerk of the House of Commons explained that the technical capacity needed to take on the Sponsor Body's role was well beyond anything within the House administrations' in-house resource. He suggested there will need to be a professional client function with the same mix of professional skills as the Sponsor Body's current team.⁴⁰ We heard that the House administrations were not resourced to take on the Sponsor Body's role, which included overseeing the Delivery Authority's performance and providing Programme sponsorship.⁴¹

33 HC49 Q 28

34 HC1100 Q 88

35 HC1100 Qq 47, 159

36 [Joint report from the House of Commons and House of Lords Commissions](#), 14 June 2022

37 House of Commons Commission, [Decisions](#), 1 February 2022

38 House of Lords Commission, [Minutes](#), 8 February 2022

39 [Joint report from the House of Commons and House of Lords Commissions](#), 14 June 2022

40 HC1100 Qq 96–97

41 HC1100 Q 96

17. In terms of the Clerks' role, Members of both Houses value their expertise in terms of procedural knowledge, but they may not have the requisite skills to oversee the delivery function (the Delivery Authority) in a complex programme with multiple interdependences. There is no evidence that the Clerk of the House and the Clerk of the Parliaments have either the expertise or the capacity to successfully oversee such a large and complicated infrastructure project. The Clerk of the House described it as, in cost terms, sitting "somewhere between the London Olympics and Crossrail". When asked, the Clerks could not set out how they would manage these responsibilities alongside their full-time roles.⁴²

18. We questioned the Clerk of the House of Commons on the House administration's performance managing similar programmes. The expected cost of the Elizabeth Tower refurbishment has roughly tripled, from £29 million set out in the outline business case in 2016 to £80 million in the revised business case approved in 2020. The Clerk of the House acknowledged that initial cost forecasting of the Elizabeth Tower in 2016 was deficient, citing reasons including that the project did not do intrusive surveys and that the project did not have a dedicated team.⁴³ The Northern Estate Programme was closed, with £70 million written off, without a new plan in place for how to decant the House of Commons.⁴⁴ Also, House officials previously managed the construction of Portcullis House, opened in September 2000. This committee found that although aspects of the project were managed well, the final cost was 18% higher than the original budget and statutory procurement rules were not followed when letting the contract for the building's fenestration. This resulted in legal fees and damages payable by the House of almost £10 million.⁴⁵

19. We also questioned the House administrations' protocols on how they responded to safety incidents during works.⁴⁶ On 19 November 2021, contractors working in the Speaker's private apartments identified a release of asbestos between 23 October and 27 October 2021.⁴⁷ We heard that, although the site was immediately closed when the incident was identified and staff directly working on the site were informed, staff who may have come into contact with asbestos were not informed until February 2022.⁴⁸ The Clerk of the House of Commons became aware of the incident on 10 December 2021 but told us it then appeared less serious with indications three staff were potentially affected. The House administrations now believe this to be 117 staff.⁴⁹

20. The Clerk of the House of Commons explained the House administrations stood down all works on the parliamentary estate on 9 February, in part to check whether the right protocols were in place and understood by the relevant staff.⁵⁰ He told us that the handling of the incident was not a defensible position and that it should not have happened as it happened.⁵¹

42 HC49 Q 80–90

43 HC1100 Q 145; [UK Parliament: Written answer, UIN 96953](#), 11 January 2022 [Letter from Dr John Benger, 29 March 2022](#)

44 HC1100 Qq 138–139; C&AG's Report, para 1.13

45 Public Accounts Committee, *Construction of Portcullis House, the new Parliamentary building*, Sixty-Third Report, Session 2001–02, HC 861, 24 July 2002

46 HC1100 Q 27

47 HC1100 Qq 2, 4

48 HC1100 Qq 5–6

49 HC 1100 Q10

50 HC1100 Qq 14, 27

51 HC1100 Q 15; HC49 Qq 1–5

21. The incident was formally reported to the Health and Safety Executive on 10 February 2022, with relevant trade unions informed on 15 February. The Clerk of the House of Commons acknowledged that the staff affected should have been contacted with greater urgency. The Clerk attributed the delay to disputes between the House administration team and its contractor and subcontractor, for example on whether the incident crossed the threshold at which notification is required, and over who had a duty to report the incident.⁵² The Health and Safety Executive are investigating the incident. The Clerks committed to respond to the inquiry's recommendations.⁵³

22. In proposing to replace the Sponsor Body, the Commission did not set out what options were considered for the revised governance and how they differed from existing arrangements.⁵⁴ The Sponsor Body told us that it has not been involved in all the conversations that led to the Commission's proposals.⁵⁵ We heard how work on what a replacement client function could look like, beyond a tentative paper, was set up after the proposal.⁵⁶ The Sponsor Body told us it did not know the Commission's reason for proposing its dissolution.⁵⁷ The Clerk of the House told us that this reasoning will be set out in a report prior to the tabling of the indicative resolutions to the Houses.⁵⁸

23. In June 2022, the independent review panel recommended that bringing the sponsor function in-house should be viewed as a pragmatic measure – the sponsor body governance model could be made to work but was unlikely to be viable given the “extent of lost confidence and momentum for bringing the sponsor function in-house...attempting to retaining the current model is unlikely to be viable”. Looking ahead, the expert panel recommended that “The governance model for the delivery phase will need to be separately considered and confirmed after the R&R scope and preferred delivery strategy is agreed”.⁵⁹

24. The Clerk of the House told us that he expected the Infrastructure and Projects Authority (IPA) to assure the arrangements but recognised that the IPA had no formal role over the Programme.⁶⁰ Following our March evidence session, the Clerk clarified that the IPA will not be providing assurance over the proposed governance and approach to the works. Instead, in response to the Commissions' request for independent advice in March 2022, a panel of “independent experts with experience of major infrastructure projects” has been established to provide assurance over both the new governance arrangements and the approach to the works.⁶¹ The Clerk of the House told us he was confident a report would be ready for the Joint Commission in the middle of June.⁶² The joint report was considered by the Commissions on 13 June 2022 and published on 14 June.⁶³

52 HC1100 Qq 9–10

53 HC49 Q2

54 House of Commons Commission, [Decisions](#), 1 February 2022

55 HC1100 Q 45

56 HC1100 Qq 85–87

57 HC1100 Q 119

58 HC1100 Qq 98, 102; HC49 Q 78

59 [Joint report from the House of Commons and House of Lords Commissions](#), 14 June 2022, pg 23

60 HC1100 Qq 70–74; C&AG's Report, para 2.6

61 [Letter from Dr John Benger, 29 March 2022](#); HC49 Qq 77–78

62 HC49 Q 91

63 [Joint report from the House of Commons and House of Lords Commissions](#), 14 June 2022

2 Approach to the Programme works

Deciding the approach

25. When we reported on this Programme in October 2020, we found the Sponsor Body had not engaged sufficiently with Members, Peers, Officials, and staff to clarify how it would reconcile the range of individual views within Parliament. While the Sponsor Body should consider Members' differing perspectives as much as is realistically possible, excessive political interference may muddy the waters, making progress more difficult. We reported that re-opening decisions risked delaying the Programme with increasing risks to personal safety, the Palace structure and taxpayer's money.⁶⁴ In January 2022 the NAO found that these risks remained.⁶⁵

26. The Clerk of the House of Commons recognised the challenge of the Programme's clients—including Members and the Commissions—not having a single voice.⁶⁶ In our view, until Parliament can provide a clear steer on what it wants, it is almost impossible for anything to be delivered.⁶⁷ We are concerned that the House authorities currently have no answer to the “multibillion-dollar” question of how to identify and future-proof a shared understanding across multiple clients with multiple views of what will be delivered. The Clerk told us that in his opinion bringing the functions of the Sponsor Body into the House service or in a joint department of both Houses could allow for better engagement with stakeholders and a better chance at achieving consensus than the current arrangements have secured.⁶⁸

27. On 18 March, the Commissions issued a joint statement setting out nine parameters to guide forthcoming decisions. This included considering further options to undertake work without decanting and looking at doing work over a shorter period. The statement reaffirmed the Commissions' commitment to health and safety.⁶⁹ The Clerk of the House and the Delivery Authority Chief Executive told us they have re-opened the scope and approach to the works by starting to consider other ways to restore and renew the Palace. This includes switching to a series of 'agile' projects.⁷⁰ The Chief Executive of the Delivery Authority told us they had been asked to look at a completely different set of options.⁷¹ In June 2022, the Commissions endorsed the independent expert panel's recommendation to develop and agree a long-term vision and outcomes for the Programme.⁷²

Managing interdependent programmes

28. In our October 2020 report, we noted that success for the Programme depended on factors outside the Sponsor Body's control.⁷³ The NAO's January 2022 report reported

64 Committee of Public Accounts, *Restoration and renewal of the Palace of Westminster*, Nineteenth Report of Session 2019–21, HC 549, 2 October 2020

65 C&AG's Report, Figure 1

66 HC1100 Qq 98–100

67 HC1100 Q 95

68 HC49 Q 26, 67

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

70 HC1100 Qq 132, 142

71 HC49 Qq 55–7

72 [Joint report from the House of Commons and House of Lords Commissions](#), 14 June 2022, pages 46 and 57

73 Committee of Public Accounts, *Restoration and renewal of the Palace of Westminster*, Nineteenth Report of Session 2019–21, HC 549, 2 October 2020

that the most significant interdependent projects beyond the Sponsor Body’s control were delayed or paused.⁷⁴ This included work to rehouse staff and heritage collection artefacts out of the House being paused for eight months and there being no viable option for a Commons decant location having been developed.⁷⁵ The House of Commons currently has responsibility for providing accommodation for the House of Commons on the parliamentary estate during the works. To produce a credible business case, the sponsor will need to understand the costs, timing and risks of the decant project to house the House of Commons.⁷⁶ The Clerk of the House told us he is confident that the Commons Chamber will need to be decanted for a significant period of time, but when the decant option is needed and where it will be is still to be determined.⁷⁷

29. When we last examined the Programme, the House of Commons planned to decant to Richmond House, creating a temporary chamber.⁷⁸ We heard that of the £70 million written off when the Commons decided not to pursue this plan, most was related to the planning permission. The Clerk of the House, Accounting Officer for these works, emphasised the importance of other work to refurbish the Northern Estate and his concerns that the compromises required of Members under the Richmond House plan would have proved unacceptable.⁷⁹ He told us the Commons does not yet have another plan to accommodate itself during the work.⁸⁰

Continued presence approach

30. Until February 2022, the Sponsor Body was preparing a business case based on Parliament fully moving out of the Palace during the works (known as a ‘full decant’). In December 2020, the House of Commons Commission agreed to ask the Sponsor Body to consider the implications of the Commons staying in the Palace during works (known as continued presence). In April 2021 the Speaker formally set out what this analysis should cover and asked the Sponsor Body to return before the end of the financial year for advice on whether to take this further. This followed the House of Lords Commission’s endorsement of the approach.⁸¹

31. The Sponsor Body returned to the Commissions with its initial analysis on the impact of a continued presence in January 2022.⁸² In the initial analysis, the Sponsor Body and Delivery Authority assumed that the Commons Chamber, alongside other functions requested by the Speaker of the House such as a media viewing gallery, would remain in the Palace. They looked at two scenarios: staying in the Commons Chamber or moving the Chamber to a different location within the Palace. In both cases, they considered delivering the same scope as the full decant option.⁸³

32. In March 2022, the Delivery Authority explained to us that initial analysis showed that, although technically possible, continued presence would lead to higher costs and

74 C&AG’s Report, para 3.24

75 C&AG’s Report, Figure 12 and para 3.27

76 C&AG’s Report, para 3.25

77 HC1100 Qq 141–142, HC49 Q59

78 Committee of Public Accounts, *Restoration and renewal of the Palace of Westminster*, Nineteenth Report of Session 2019–21, HC 549, 2 October 2020

79 HC1100 Q 139

80 HC1100 Q 143

81 C&AG’s Report, para 7

82 C&AG’s Report, para 8

83 HC1100 Q 126; C&AG’s Report, Figure 5

take an enormously longer time (an extra 15 to 48 years). It would create extraordinary health and safety and fire safety risks, with a large array of temporary services required to maintain a continued presence. Parliament would also need to change how it operated although continued presence could still lead to potentially unacceptable disruption and noise for those working in the Palace and increase the potential for exposure to airborne asbestos which would take significant work to remove.⁸⁴ The Delivery Authority told us that it is in the process of letting the contracts for intrusive surveys, having undertaken initial investigations into where asbestos might be located.⁸⁵ The House of Commons Trade Union told us in written evidence that “the ongoing viability of the Palace of Westminster as a safe workplace is at stake and...anything less than the full decant envisaged under the Act would put that at risk”.⁸⁶

33. The Delivery Authority has now been tasked with developing new options for undertaking the work that will involve some continued presence.⁸⁷ We asked the Clerks if they could manage the risks to users of the building should the House of Commons maintain a presence in the Palace during the works. The Clerks did not clearly state whether they could but told us they would want to assess the level of risk very carefully and recognised the greater risk of work undertaken with the Palace occupied. They would not sign-off any plans which included an unacceptable level of risk.⁸⁸ The House of Commons Clerk implied that while continued presence may not seem viable, a full decant may prove to be politically unacceptable.⁸⁹ In June 2022, the Commissions set out their plans to undertake work in stages, focusing first on priority areas such as fire safety and protection, replacing old and obsolete building services and addressing asbestos. They wanted to develop a new approach that would reduce the time Members would need to move out of the Palace.⁹⁰

34. In our May evidence session we asked the Delivery Authority whether, given its earlier analysis of continued presence options, it was comfortable developing these current options. The Delivery Authority told us that it had agreed a task brief to respond to a new and different question on the issue of decant.⁹¹ In May 2022, the Clerk told us that whatever option was ultimately decided upon, some form of decant for a “significant period of time” would be required in order to restore and renew the services in and around the two Chambers.⁹²

Transparency and accountability

35. Through our work we often see a lack of openness and transparency about programme progress, performance and decision-making. In January 2021, we concluded it was vital that Parliament’s own major project, the Restoration and Renewal Programme, was an exemplar of an open and transparent project which welcomes full scrutiny.⁹³

84 HC1100 Q 116; Sponsor Body, [Restoration and Renewal Programme: Essential Scheme: initial assessment of cost and schedule; and continued presence: impact study](#), DEP2022-0145, 23 February 2022

85 HC49 Q4

86 [RRP0003](#)

87 HC49 Q 38

88 HC1100 Qq 106, 108–109

89 HC1100 Q 132

90 [Joint report from the House of Commons and House of Lords Commissions](#), 14 June 2022, pg 23

91 HC49 Qq 55–57

92 HC49 Q 59

93 Public Accounts Committee, *Lessons from major projects and programmes*, Thirty-Ninth Report, Session 2019–21, HC 694, 29 January 2021

36. For government major programmes, Accounting Officers are expected to assess the delivery risks, publishing a summary of this assessment, and seek a ministerial direction should they consider a decision they are being asked to implement compromises value for money.⁹⁴ In 2020 the Speaker of the House introduced a procedure, modelled on this, for parliamentary work where the Clerk of the House could place a statement of his views in the Library.⁹⁵ The Clerk of the House would become Accounting Officer for restoration works should the House administrations oversee this work. The current Accounting Officer for the Programme is the CEO of the Sponsor Body.⁹⁶ We noted our concern that the Clerks might feel hampered in making their professional views clear because of the complex governance structures of the UK Parliament.⁹⁷ Neither the Clerk of the House nor the Clerk of the Parliaments have made clear publicly their own views on what programme of work could be delivered.⁹⁸

37. Furthermore, the Commission has not yet set out its reason for suggesting the abolition of the Sponsor Body.⁹⁹ The Sponsor Body had set out indicative cost and time estimates for the work, and then heard about plans to abolish it – we asked if this was a case of ‘shooting the messenger’ as the Commission did not want to hear the bad news. The Sponsor Body said “it can feel like that a little, yes”.¹⁰⁰ In its written evidence, the House of Commons Trade Union Side noted that “Creating an arm’s length sponsor body was intended to allow the very objectivity and independence that has apparently now led to its own abolition”.¹⁰¹

38. To work quickly, Parliament and the Sponsor Body agreed that parliamentary domestic committees, such as the finance committees for each house who support the Commissions, would not scrutinise and endorse the Programme’s assessment of the Programme costs and the impact of continued presence before this material was shared with the House Commissions.¹⁰² The Sponsor Body does not have a statutory obligation to engage these committees.¹⁰³ The Sponsor Body explained the intention was to share its analysis of the continued presence option with the domestic committees after an initial discussion with the House Commissions.¹⁰⁴ The domestic committees do not have a statutory role, but whatever succeeds the Sponsor Body may still need their endorsement to progress work on the Programme and supporting projects.¹⁰⁵

39. We reiterated that significant developments with the Programme should be fully in the public domain and received a commitment from the Clerk of the House, that the House will always be told when there is a significant development with the Programme.¹⁰⁶

94 HM Treasury, *Managing Public Money*, May 2021, Box 3.2, paragraphs 3.4.3. and 3.6.2. Available at: [MPM_Spring_21__without_annexes_040322.pdf \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)

95 Hansard HC, [29 January 2020, vol. 670, col 781](#)

96 HC1100 Qq 68–69

97 HC1100 Q 107

98 HC1100 Qq 103–109

99 HC1100 Qq 98, 102, 119

100 HC1100 Qq 119–120

101 [RRP0003](#)

102 C&AG’s Report, para 2.16

103 [Letter from Dr John Benger, 29 March 2022](#)

104 HC1100 Q 41

105 C&AG’s Report, para 2.13

106 HC1100 Q 29

However, we were concerned that the House was not properly informed of the resignation of the Sponsor Body CEO. The resignation was posted on the Parliamentary intranet, but that is not sufficient for news as significant as this departure.¹⁰⁷

40. Following the House administrations being three months late sharing information about a recent asbestos incident, the Clerk of the House acknowledged staff should have been notified earlier.¹⁰⁸ We heard relevant trade union representatives were informed on 15 February, five days after the report to the Health and Safety Executive.¹⁰⁹ The Clerk of the House informed non-affected staff working in the Palace of the incident through an intranet article but also recognised that many staff do not tend to read the intranet.¹¹⁰ Given the location of the incident, the House administrations were not required to inform the trade unions for Members or third-party contractors.¹¹¹

107 HC49 Q 17

108 HC1100 Q 28

109 HC1100 Q 43; [Letter from Dr John Benger, 29 March 2022](#)

110 HC1100 Qq 30 to 33

111 [Letter from Dr John Benger, 29 March 2022](#)

Formal minutes

Monday 27 June 2022

Members present:

Sir Geoffrey Clifton-Brown

Dan Carden

Kate Green

Sarah Olney

Angela Richardson

James Wild

Restoration and Renewal of Parliament

Draft Report (*Restoration and Renewal of Parliament*), proposed by the Chair, brought up and read.

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

Paragraphs 1 to 40 read and agreed to.

Summary agreed to.

Introduction agreed to.

Conclusions and recommendations agreed to.

Resolved, That the Report be the Tenth of the Committee to the House.

Ordered, That the Chair make the Report to the House.

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

Adjournment

Adjourned till Wednesday 29 June at 1.00pm

Witnesses

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

Monday 11 May 2022 (HC 49)

Dr John Benger, Clerk of the House of Commons, **Simon Burton**, Clerk of the Parliaments, House of Lords, **Sarah Johnson**, Chief Executive, Restoration and Renewal Sponsor Body, and **David Goldstone**, Chief Executive, Restoration and Renewal Delivery Authority.

[Q1-96](#)

Monday 14 March 2022 (HC 1100)

Sarah Johnson, Chief Executive, Palace of Westminster Restoration and Renewal Sponsor Body; **Dr John Benger**, Clerk of the House of Commons, House of Commons; **Simon Burton**, Clerk of Parliaments, House of Lords; **David Goldstone**, Chief Executive, Palace of Westminster Restoration and Renewal Delivery Body

[Q1-163](#)

Published written evidence

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

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

- 1 Hansard Society ([RRP0002](#))
- 2 House of Commons Trade Union Side ([RRP0005](#))
- 3 House of Commons Trade Union Side ([RRP0003](#))
- 4 Meakin, Dr Alexandra (Lecturer in Politics, University of Leeds) ([RRP0001](#))
- 5 Simmons, Mr John ([RRP0004](#))

List of Reports from the Committee during the current Parliament

All publications from the Committee are available on the [publications page](#) of the Committee's website.

Session 2022–23

Number	Title	Reference
1st	Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy Annual Report and Accounts 2020–21	HC 59
2nd	Lessons from implementing IR35 reforms	HC 60
3rd	The future of the Advanced Gas-cooled Reactors	HC 118
4th	Use of evaluation and modelling in government	HC 254
5th	Local economic growth	HC 252
6th	Department of Health and Social Care 2020–21 Annual Report and Accounts	HC 253
7th	Armoured Vehicles: the Ajax programme	HC 259
8th	Financial sustainability of the higher education sector in England	HC 257
9th	Child Maintenance	HC 255
1st Special Report	Sixth Annual Report of the Chair of the Committee of Public Accounts	HC 50

Session 2021–22

Number	Title	Reference
1st	Low emission cars	HC 186
2nd	BBC strategic financial management	HC 187
3rd	COVID-19: Support for children's education	HC 240
4th	COVID-19: Local government finance	HC 239
5th	COVID-19: Government Support for Charities	HC 250
6th	Public Sector Pensions	HC 289
7th	Adult Social Care Markets	HC 252
8th	COVID 19: Culture Recovery Fund	HC 340
9th	Fraud and Error	HC 253
10th	Overview of the English rail system	HC 170
11th	Local auditor reporting on local government in England	HC 171
12th	COVID 19: Cost Tracker Update	HC 173
13th	Initial lessons from the government's response to the COVID-19 pandemic	HC 175

Number	Title	Reference
14th	Windrush Compensation Scheme	HC 174
15th	DWP Employment support	HC 177
16th	Principles of effective regulation	HC 176
17th	High Speed 2: Progress at Summer 2021	HC 329
18th	Government's delivery through arm's-length bodies	HC 181
19th	Protecting consumers from unsafe products	HC 180
20th	Optimising the defence estate	HC 179
21st	School Funding	HC 183
22nd	Improving the performance of major defence equipment contracts	HC 185
23rd	Test and Trace update	HC 182
24th	Crossrail: A progress update	HC 184
25th	The Department for Work and Pensions' Accounts 2020–21 – Fraud and error in the benefits system	HC 633
26th	Lessons from Greensill Capital: accreditation to business support schemes	HC 169
27th	Green Homes Grant Voucher Scheme	HC 635
28th	Efficiency in government	HC 636
29th	The National Law Enforcement Data Programme	HC 638
30th	Challenges in implementing digital change	HC 637
31st	Environmental Land Management Scheme	HC 639
32nd	Delivering gigabitcapable broadband	HC 743
33rd	Underpayments of the State Pension	HC 654
34th	Local Government Finance System: Overview and Challenges	HC 646
35th	The pharmacy early payment and salary advance schemes in the NHS	HC 745
36th	EU Exit: UK Border post transition	HC 746
37th	HMRC Performance in 2020–21	HC 641
38th	COVID-19 cost tracker update	HC 640
39th	DWP Employment Support: Kickstart Scheme	HC 655
40th	Excess votes 2020–21: Serious Fraud Office	HC 1099
41st	Achieving Net Zero: Follow up	HC 642
42nd	Financial sustainability of schools in England	HC 650
43rd	Reducing the backlog in criminal courts	HC 643
44th	NHS backlogs and waiting times in England	HC 747
45th	Progress with trade negotiations	HC 993
46th	Government preparedness for the COVID-19 pandemic: lessons for government on risk	HC 952

Number	Title	Reference
47th	Academies Sector Annual Report and Accounts 2019/20	HC 994
48th	HMRC's management of tax debt	HC 953
49th	Regulation of private renting	HC 996
50th	Bounce Back Loans Scheme: Follow-up	HC 951
51st	Improving outcomes for women in the criminal justice system	HC 997
52nd	Ministry of Defence Equipment Plan 2021–31	HC 1164
1st Special Report	Fifth Annual Report of the Chair of the Committee of Public Accounts	HC 222

Session 2019–21

Number	Title	Reference
1st	Support for children with special educational needs and disabilities	HC 85
2nd	Defence Nuclear Infrastructure	HC 86
3rd	High Speed 2: Spring 2020 Update	HC 84
4th	EU Exit: Get ready for Brexit Campaign	HC 131
5th	University technical colleges	HC 87
6th	Excess votes 2018–19	HC 243
7th	Gambling regulation: problem gambling and protecting vulnerable people	HC 134
8th	NHS capital expenditure and financial management	HC 344
9th	Water supply and demand management	HC 378
10th	Defence capability and the Equipment Plan	HC 247
11th	Local authority investment in commercial property	HC 312
12th	Management of tax reliefs	HC 379
13th	Whole of Government Response to COVID-19	HC 404
14th	Readying the NHS and social care for the COVID-19 peak	HC 405
15th	Improving the prison estate	HC 244
16th	Progress in remediating dangerous cladding	HC 406
17th	Immigration enforcement	HC 407
18th	NHS nursing workforce	HC 408
19th	Restoration and renewal of the Palace of Westminster	HC 549
20th	Tackling the tax gap	HC 650
21st	Government support for UK exporters	HC 679
22nd	Digital transformation in the NHS	HC 680
23rd	Delivering carrier strike	HC 684

Number	Title	Reference
24th	Selecting towns for the Towns Fund	HC 651
25th	Asylum accommodation and support transformation programme	HC 683
26th	Department of Work and Pensions Accounts 2019–20	HC 681
27th	Covid-19: Supply of ventilators	HC 685
28th	The Nuclear Decommissioning Authority's management of the Magnox contract	HC 653
29th	Whitehall preparations for EU Exit	HC 682
30th	The production and distribution of cash	HC 654
31st	Starter Homes	HC 88
32nd	Specialist Skills in the civil service	HC 686
33rd	Covid-19: Bounce Back Loan Scheme	HC 687
34th	Covid-19: Support for jobs	HC 920
35th	Improving Broadband	HC 688
36th	HMRC performance 2019–20	HC 690
37th	Whole of Government Accounts 2018–19	HC 655
38th	Managing colleges' financial sustainability	HC 692
39th	Lessons from major projects and programmes	HC 694
40th	Achieving government's long-term environmental goals	HC 927
41st	COVID 19: the free school meals voucher scheme	HC 689
42nd	COVID-19: Government procurement and supply of Personal Protective Equipment	HC 928
43rd	COVID-19: Planning for a vaccine Part 1	HC 930
44th	Excess Votes 2019–20	HC 1205
45th	Managing flood risk	HC 931
46th	Achieving Net Zero	HC 935
47th	COVID-19: Test, track and trace (part 1)	HC 932
48th	Digital Services at the Border	HC 936
49th	COVID-19: housing people sleeping rough	HC 934
50th	Defence Equipment Plan 2020–2030	HC 693
51st	Managing the expiry of PFI contracts	HC 1114
52nd	Key challenges facing the Ministry of Justice	HC 1190
53rd	Covid 19: supporting the vulnerable during lockdown	HC 938
54th	Improving single living accommodation for service personnel	HC 940
55th	Environmental tax measures	HC 937
56th	Industrial Strategy Challenge Fund	HC 941