

Minutes

R&R Programme Board

Meeting date	15 September 2026
Meeting location	Committee Room 4, Palace of Westminster
Meeting time	13:00–16:00

Attendees

Programme Board Members	Officials
Judith Cummins MP (Chair)	Meg Conway-Wait (R&R Client Team)
Lord Collins of Highbury	Jonathan Dewsbury (Commons)
Paul Duffree	Andy Helliwell (Lords)
Marie Goldman MP	Russ MacMillan (Delivery Authority)
Steve Hails	Lauren Marchant (R&R Client Team)
Lord Mackinlay of Richborough	Charlotte Simmonds (R&R Client Team)
John Lamont MP	Jenni Singleton (Commons)
Chloe Mawson	Michael Torrance (Lords)
Sir Jonathan Stephens	Simon Thurley (Delivery Authority)
Sir Mark Tami MP	Matthew White (Delivery Authority) <i>(for Items 4 & 5)</i>
Lord Vaux of Harrowden	

1. Welcome and standing items

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies were received from Dr Michele Dix and Tom Goldsmith.

The Board agreed to the publication of the minutes of 30 June.

2. Update from Managing Director of the Client Team

The Managing Director of the Client Team updated attendees on:

- The Costed Proposals Debates: noting that whilst the programme teams remained ready to support debates, the debates had not yet been announced and therefore scenario planning for different debate timings was ongoing. The Board noted the Leader of the House's recent comments about debates.¹
- Programme Highlight Reports for June and July: noting that the overall RAG status was now Red, reflecting that the Costed Proposals debates did not take place before the summer recess.

¹ HC Deb, 3 September 2026, [col 481](#).

- Engagement and Communications activities that had taken place over the summer recess and forthcoming events.
- Work on skills: noting that the DA had supported a Welsh apprenticeship scheme, with 80 apprentices due to start this month.
- Progress on House of Lords and House of Commons temporary accommodation workstreams, with further update papers expected in October;
- Surveys: noting that survey activity remained on track over the summer recess.
- Assurance activity.

The Board noted work would continue by the Commons Buildings and Infrastructure Portfolio to identify mitigations to recover time in its schedule.

*The R&R Programme Board **noted** the June and July programme highlight reports and the update from the MD of the Client Team.*

3. Update from the Chair of the Delivery Authority

The Chair of the Delivery Authority updated attendees on the Delivery Authority's commercial and procurement strategy and discussed the impact of different debate timings.

*The R&R Programme Board **noted** the update from the Chair of the Delivery Authority.*

4. Scenario planning: parliamentary debates on the costed proposals report

The Board was briefed on scenario planning for the timing of parliamentary debates on the Costed Proposals report. The paper set out two planning scenarios: debates taking place by the end of December 2026, or by March 2027.

The Board discussed the cost and schedule implications of different debate timings, including the cumulative effect of defined impacts, inflation, and continued Delivery Authority and Client Team expenditure. Members noted the cost of delay and that later debate timings would increase risks to programme cost and schedule. They noted that these impacts would be expected to increase further if debates took place after March 2027. Members emphasised the need to present clearly the implications of any further delay.

The Board discussed the proposed planning assumption that debates would take place by December 2026. It noted that this was a planning and forecasting assumption only, and did not pre-empt any decision about the timing of debates. The Board agreed that December 2026 was an appropriate assumption for planning purposes, given its significance as a decision point for the programme.

The Board requested that the programme teams continue to develop plans and budgets on the basis that the programme would progress, so that the programme could move quickly if a decision was made in December.

The Board noted that further delay in scheduling debates could affect staff retention.

The R&R Programme Board:

*a) **noted** the implications of alternative debate timing scenarios for programme costs and schedule.*

*b) **noted** the potential mitigation measures and associated decision points to help minimise delay to the overall Programme schedule.*

*c) **approved** the adoption of a planning assumption that debates will take place by December 2026.*

5. Work Update: Cost Reduction Opportunities and Phase One Works Definition

The Board was briefed on work underway to identify cost reduction opportunities and further define Phase One Works.

The Board noted that the programme was already incurring costs of delay as a result of the debates not yet having taken place. The Board discussed whether further resources should be directed towards initiating development of a 'do-minimum' option. It agreed that this work should not be progressed at this stage, as existing work had sufficiently considered lower outcome levels and the Client Board had been clear that there should be no further optioneering.

The Board noted the importance of explaining the outcome levels that had previously been considered but not recommended, including that some of the lower outcome levels considered would result in worse-than-existing provision of some functions and may not achieve sufficient compliance with legislation, regulation and compliance standards in key areas, including building services resilience and property protection from fire.

The Board noted the distinction between current Mechanical, Electrical, Public health and Fire safety projects required to keep the building operational in the short term and the programme of work required to restore the building over the longer term.

The Board noted that the condition of mechanical, electrical, plumbing and fire systems remained a key driver of the need for significant intervention in the Palace of Westminster. The Board also noted that replacing these systems would involve substantial disruption, significant construction activity and related site safety considerations.

The Board noted the importance of being able to respond to questions likely to arise during debates. The Board requested further work to provide a clearer articulation of: the costs and actions currently being incurred and taken to maintain the Palace; the comparative cost of the lower outcome levels previously considered and what they would and would not deliver; and the cost, scope and service life of the proposed MEPF project, including what it would and would not deliver, and information on what enhancements that would be required if R&R works were delayed or cancelled.

The Board noted the Client Board paper setting out how decisions relating to outcome levels had been reached.²

*The R&R Programme Board **noted** the work underway on cost reduction opportunities and the further definition of Phase One Works.*

6. Papers to note

The Board noted the polling update.

The Board noted the forward look.

² [Delivering Restoration and Renewal of The Palace of Westminster: Supplementary Information.](#)