

HOUSE OF COMMONS COMMISSION / MEC

Tuesday 1 February 2022 at 6.00 pm
Meeting in the Speaker's Study

Present:

The Speaker, in the Chair
Nickie Aiken
Nick Brown
Thangam Debbonaire
Jacob Rees-Mogg
Sir Charles Walker
Dr John Benger (Clerk of the House)
Marianne Cwynarski (Director General (Operations))
Mr Shrinivas Honap (External member)
Louise Wilson (External member)

Apologies:

Pete Wishart

DECISIONS

COMMISSION

1. Restoration and Renewal – consideration of governance and approach

Taking account of its discussion on 24 January 2022, which expressed concern about the cost and schedule presented in the initial assessment from the Sponsor Body, the Commission agreed it should propose the following changes to the governance and approach of the programme to the House:

- a) 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. The Delivery Authority should continue with the new department as its client. The budget for the sponsor function and Delivery Authority would remain separate from the budget for the House administration.**
- b) that the new department should be overseen by the House Commissions in the short term to oversee the initial changes. A joint committee of both Houses, supported by external expertise, should then be appointed to oversee the work in the long run, with powers delegated from the Commissions. Expenditure should be subject to an annual external review reporting to the Parliamentary Works Estimates Commission.**
- c) that the Delivery Authority and the new department should be asked to continue to undertake investigatory work and develop proposals for the Parliamentary buildings works to be laid before the two Houses, as required by the Parliamentary Works (Restoration and Renewal) Act 2019, that enable a more rapid prioritisation of critical work on the Palace and reduce the need for a complete or nearly-complete decant of the Palace.**

The Commission noted the risks in changing the governance structure and a new approach to the works and agreed to seek independent assurance of the viability in principle of these proposals.

The Commission noted the importance of coordination with the House of Lords and agreed to engage with the House of Lords Commission and Members as a matter of urgency, to seek their comments and views on the changes proposed.

The Commission discussed the wider communications and engagement strategy. It acknowledged that this was a difficult discussion that would impact on the staff and teams involved in the process and recorded the important work undertaken to date by the Sponsor Body and Delivery Authority. The Commission agreed to ask the Sponsor Body to publish the Initial Assessment of Cost and Schedule, and of Continued Presence, to inform consideration by both Houses.

COMMISSION/MEC

2. Papers to note

The Commission took note of the following papers:

- Deliberations from the meeting held on 24 January 2022.**

3. Any other business

4. Date of next meeting

The next meeting of the Commission/MEC will take place on Monday 28 February 2022 at 10.00 am in the Speaker's Study.